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[THE UNJUST STEWARD.]

THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.

CHAPTER. III.

Yes, though impressions calm and sweet
Thrill round my heart and warm my breast
And I am only glad,
The tear-drop stands in either eye,
And yet I cannot tell these why;
I'm pleased and yet I'm sad.

SIR HUGH DELANCY with a cautious hand opened the door of the large, breezy apartment, where his fair child was awaiting him, and held up his finger in token of silence to his companion as they advanced into the room.

"Irene, my darling, did you think I was away long?" he asked, placing himself at her side, while he motioned Eustace Villiers to a seat opposite.

"No," she replied, with a quick, listening attitude. "No—but you have brought some one with you, papa. I can tell you are not alone. Why should you deceive me?" she added, half-reproachfully.

"My beloved, you do me injustice to dream of such a cruelty," he returned. "I did but wait before I announced to you a stranger's presence—at least, I should say, the presence of a new friend—a new acquaintance, who will, I hope, bring much happiness to cheer my Irene's solitary life. You will suffer his presence for my sake—will you not, my pet?"

"Pardon me, Sir Hugh; you are surely doing Miss Delancy an injustice now," interrupted Eustace, in his mellow tones, that carried a peculiar charm in their refined accent and soothing softness. "She needs no such pleading to allow the visits of one who desires to cheer you in your seclusion without intruding on your privacy, and who will ever be at your orders to come and to depart, as if he were a son of the house. You will permit me this privilege, will you not, Miss Delancy?" he added, going toward her and gently taking her hand in his with a velvet-like

pressure that soothed rather than alarmed the timid girl's susceptible nerves.

Irene's large eyes were turned in the direction of the voice with an inquiring gaze.

It was almost impossible to believe that she was sightless—the look was so feminine in its fawn-like timidity, so speaking in the doubting deliberation with which she listened to his words.

There was silence for a moment.

At length the breathless anxiety of the watchers was relieved.

"Yes," she said, softly, "I like your voice and your touch. I do not think you will weary me. If my father wishes it you shall come."

A brilliant flash gleamed from Eustace Villiers's glittering eyes as he exchanged a look of triumph with the blind girl's father.

"That is what I expected," he said. "I knew you were too unselfish and noble to deprive Sir Hugh of the very slightest relaxation from his devotion to you, Miss Delancy; and it will, I hope, only add to your cheerfulness if he be soothed and diverted in his anxious cares. Now it is settled let us forget all these formalities," he added, lightly. "Sir Hugh, it would be an ill-omened commencement of our task to keep Miss Delancy any longer from refreshment."

And as he spoke he quickly placed himself on the other side of Irene's couch, and began to assist her to some of the exquisite fruit and creams and the savoury *petit pains* that were waiting for discussion.

It seemed almost like witchcraft.

An hour before the very existence of the daring intruder had been unknown to the father and daughter, and now he was sitting, coolly sharing their most domestic meal, assisting Irene to the tempting morsels that he seemed to know by instinct were adapted to her delicate appetite, and which he contrived to place most conveniently within her reach.

"One would think you had been accustomed to an invalid, Mr. Villiers," said Sir Hugh, with a half-pleased, half-piqued air, as he watched his daughter's submissive acceptance of the stranger's attentions.

"You are right, Sir Hugh. I was for weeks, nay

months, the attendant of a dear, fair sister," was the reply. "She died in this sunny land, and I have never left it since."

"And did she suffer—was she very sad?" asked Irene, anxiously.

"She was like a fading flower that needed all the light and warmth it could receive," said Eustace, feelingly; "and, thank Heaven, she did not lack one breath of such soothing breezes till her last hour. But the malady was too deep, too hopeless," he added, sadly.

"Like mine," was the touching, scarcely audible comment.

"Not so, Miss Delancy. For your affliction there are ever hope and comfort and soothing alleviation; for my poor Constance all that could be accomplished was to prolong life," replied Eustace, firmly. "But do not let us speak of such melancholy subjects. I was wrong to mention my own griefs when I came to strive to cheer yours. Tell me, did you enjoy the opera last night?" he added, cheerfully. "I watched your changing expressions so closely that I believe I could read each emotion you felt, and they all seemed glad and blissful."

Irene's face lighted up.

"Ah, yes, it was exquisite—like a breeze from Paradise," she murmured, as if rather recalling her own dream-like happiness than answering her companion. "And then that voice—it was like an angel's more than a mortal woman's. Oh, how I should love her, that wondrous girl," she went on, clasping her hands. "Norma is her name, is it not? A sweet name I think. Is she very beautiful, Mr. Villiers? Her voice sounds as if she is."

"Do you think that is a necessary consequence?" said the young man, smiling. "But in this case you are correct. Norma D'Albano is certainly handsome, in her peculiar style; do you not think so, Sir Hugh?"

"I—yes, I dare say she is," returned the baronet, abstractedly, "but I did not observe her very closely."

"Tell me about her, Mr. Villiers—describe her. I like to draw pictures of those I am interested in," ex-



claimed Irene, eagerly. "Make one for me of this signora."

There was a slight, almost imperceptible pause before the reply came, but it was perhaps only to recall the image he was requested to conjure up.

"She is dark, flashing, impetuous, petite, and graceful," he said, at length. "One to admire, but not to love or trust."

"Then you know her?" exclaimed the girl, quickly.

"Of course; so does all Naples. And I have given you the impression she made on me, Miss Delancy. You love music I suppose, dearly, passionately. So much I gathered last night."

"It is my chief, I had almost said, my only delight," she murmured, "but that is ungrateful when my dear father reads to me, talks to me, and pets me from morn till night."

"May I try to sing to you?" asked Eustace. "I am but a poor substitute for such strains as the Norma's, but I may perhaps contrive to recall to you some of the pleasure you may have enjoyed in listening to the familiar melodies."

"Oh, do—do! It will indeed be a joy," she said, eagerly. "But we have no piano. Papa knew that it would be a mockery to get me one. I am not like some blind ones. I cannot touch my favourite instrument without sight."

"I think I can see a guitar in yonder corner," said the young man, smiling. "If Sir Hugh has no objection I will try my clumsy fingers on its delicate strings."

He was right.

In an almost darkened recess, which perhaps had rarely been even glanced at by the absorbed father, stood a Spanish lute, with a faded blue ribbon attached to it that spoke of feminine fingers having once welcomed its melodies, and then perhaps abandoned it from sorrow or absence or death.

"Yes, yes—quick. I long to hear the sounds once more," said Irene, her face lighting up. "I have not heard the guitar for such long, long months—nay, years, is it not, papa? It was before we left England, when I was bright and happy. It was at the dear 'Rookery,' which I shall never—never see more—never more, nor—"

A deep sigh broke the sentence.

Eustace gave a sharp, inquiring glance at the girl's face.

The sightless eyes were downcast, and the lips quivered with a pain that scarcely seemed to belong solely to the one great sorrow of her life.

A contraction on Sir Hugh's brow seemed to confirm the impression that the almost superhuman penetration of the guest conceived.

There was a secret connected with the "Rookery"—a memory—a grief.

Eustace Villiers vowed that the mystery should be solved and the memory should be obliterated, or—But we need not follow the alternative that revolved in that teeming, ruthless brain.

His sole answer at that moment was to touch the instrument with his skilled fingers, and after striking a few light chords to burst into a flood of melody that literally made Irene pause for breath.

The girl's eyes were closed, and her head rested on the cushion behind her, as the entrancing sounds came on her ears.

The rich tenor voice, the thrilling expression, the notes that died away with almost magic softness, melted and occupied her very soul.

If such an atmosphere would surround her for ever, she would scarcely need other joys, hardly need to complain of grief with deprivation of light and happiness that was her portion.

"Again, again, please!" came from her parted lips, but Eustace put down the instrument with a smile.

"Not so, Miss Delancy. You would become too soft, too dependent, were you to live under such influences. I desire to give you all you have lost. More especially, health and intellect and energy. Sir Hugh, forgive my taking the physician's tone, but your daughter needs bracing, not the enfeebling influences of such saddening melodies. If you will permit me to spend this morning in your company, it should rather be occupied in reading to her some strengthening, noble book than the mere gratification of the senses."

It was a bold tone to take for a stranger.

But Sir Hugh understood full well his meaning, and had no alternative save to comply.

"Irene, dearest, would you like to have some of your favourite authors read in younger and more vigorous tones than your old father can assume?" he asked, gently.

The girl was still under the spell, as it were, of the wondrous melody that had conquered and softened her whole soul.

And it appeared as if she were bound to yield to the enchanter's wand whithersoever it might chance to lead.

"If you will," she whispered. "Yes, it will be a pleasure to me if it is not too much trouble to Mr. Villiers."

Eustace did not reply save by drawing a small volume from his dress and commencing without delay one of Petrarch's exquisite love sonnets.

His accent, his voice, the impassioned variety he threw into every new phrase and tone, cast an irresistible spell over the susceptible listener.

Ere he had finished Irene was reclining back on her cushions, her eyes closed, the moist tears glittering on the long lashes, and her fair cheeks dyed with a faint but lovely scarlet, that told of the fire in the kindling veins.

The reader softly closed his volume as he gazed. "Enough," he said; "you must be tenderly treated, Miss Delancy. Even Petrarch may pall on the satiated sense, or wind up the delicate system till the chain may break. I shall watch my fair patient with the care and tenderness that I once devoted to my lost Constance. Sir Hugh, I have your permission to repeat my visit. I pledge my word there shall be no cause to repeat your confidence."

With a significant glance to the father and a gentle pressure of the daughter's hand Eustace Villiers departed.

Irene with a deep sigh, rather of emotion than of sadness, resigned herself to repose after the strange agitation which had shaken her whole frame, or rather perhaps pervaded it with a soothing, delicious thrill.

CHAPTER IV.

I must hear

A yearning heart within me to the grave.
I am of these o'er whom a breath of air
Just darkening in its course the lake's bright
waters.

Has power to call up shadows in the silent hour
From the dim past.

"Victor, cousin mine, are you dreaming?" cried a woman's voice, clear and resonant as a silver bell.

The next moment a girl in a riding-habit entered the French window of a large, old-fashioned, but handsome apartment that seemed to be appropriated as a sort of morning-room in the spacious though ancient mansion which rejoiced in the suggestive title of "The Rookery," and was situated in one of the midland counties of old England.

The young man thus addressed sprang up from the chair in which he was lounging, and, as he did so, slipped covertly in his pocket a small glittering object that he held in his hand.

"I beg your pardon, Celia. I really had no idea of the lapse of time," he exclaimed, hastily glancing at his watch. "I will be ready in five minutes. Are the horses at the door?"

The girl thus addressed was a tall, splendid-looking creature of some twenty-four or five years of age, but in her case the mature period at which her youth had arrived rather added to than detracted from her beauty.

The haughty mien, the rich complexion, the massive black hair, the well-developed figure, all gained rather than lost from the maturity of womanhood; and Celia Vyrian had not been one-half so attractive and bewitching at eighteen as in the glorious perfection of her present queen-like beauty.

Victor Mordant was hastily leaving the room to atone for his remiss indolence or preoccupation.

"Stay one moment, Victor, for you have already wasted so much time that it cannot much signify if a little more be added to the delay, and I would fain speak to you what perhaps should have been said before."

She placed herself as she uttered the words in the chair he had just quitted.

It was opposite a portrait, which hung by itself on the wall, as if none other was worthy to be companion to its loveliness.

The portrait was a full-length figure of one of the brightest, fairest blondes that artist could imagine or nature create, a figure and face marvellously like Irene Delancy, save that the delicate cheek of the blind girl was in the picture warmed with girlish health and bloom and the sad, patient look of suffering replaced by a joyous, fearless gladness, that knew neither sickness, sorrow, nor apprehension of evil.

Celia's eyes glanced from its loveliness to Victor's flushing face with a proud and scornful smile.

"Victor, I will not be deceived or trifled with. What does all this vacillation and weakness mean? How is it that I find you riveted before a portrait of your false love, when you owe both homage and love—shall I say it?—gratitude to me, your cousin, your betrothed? Victor, I demand the truth, and then I shall know how to act—what to think of one near to me in blood and in heart."

The young man's fine Saxon face had betrayed but too transparently the confusion of his mind as the haughty girl spoke; but he did not avoid her eagle gaze as he listened to the reproach.

"Celia, Celia, this is needless torture to both of us," he said, impatiently. "I have long since given up any thought of Irene Delancy, save as one all unworthy of my love. My faith is pledged to you, my true-hearted, generous cousin. Do you repent, do you doubt me, that you wake up such miserable memories on every slight occasion when you fancy yourself neglected? I can give you up if it is so, Celia, but I cannot—I will not be the mere slave and puppet of your caprice."

It was a somewhat new tone for the frank-hearted, chivalrous lover to take with his imperious mistress, and for the moment she paused ere she ventured on her next bold, daring card in the game she was playing.

"Yet you were patient and submissive when you were despised and cast off by the girl whom you had chosen to exalt as an idol, till you found her but of clay, false and interested at the very core. Victor, have you forgotten how she lured you on, and simulated love and devotion, till your inheritance was taken from you, and then how on account of our uncle's will, which gave all to me, and left to you but the pittance he had settled in his lifetime, she hastened from the very country that held you both, as if she feared your importunity and pursuit? Then, without a word of love or sympathy or kindness, she commissioned her father to convey to you her withdrawal of every pledge, and demand of freedom from even the semblance of engagement. Was it not as I say, Victor? Am I not correct in my sketch of the past?"

Victor had turned away, and sunk half listlessly in a chair, somewhat shaded from the light, so that the girl could scarcely read his features.

But she could guess from his very attitude and movements the punishment he was enduring.

"Celia, it may be that she was innocent," he said, at length. "Who can tell that it was not her father who was the culprit in the matter? It was he who sent the letter. Not one line in Irene's own handwriting ever assured me of her own feelings or wishes in the miserable affair."

"Poor, infatuated Victor," said the girl, scornfully. "Were it not for our respective positions I believe I should bid you take your own course and reap the reward of your weak folly. But woman's nature is too strong within me for such retribution," she added, going up to him and laying her neglected hand upon his hot and burning brow. "Victor, only consider the utter impossibility of what you would perjure yourself. Did you ever know Sir Hugh Delancy guilty of a falsehood or dishonesty? Did he not assure you, on his pledged word, that Irene had bidden him write of her own desire, and that he had not influenced her decision by word or deed? Did she not return to you gifts of which her father could not even have known the existence? Victor, Victor, I can forgive—I have forgiven much. I have well nigh offered myself and my heritage to your acceptance, albeit there would be no lack of suitors for the heiress of the Rookery and its lands and wealth. But I will not be insulted by a faithless lover, a weak and unmanly recreant, and I will have all or nothing, Victor; remember that at your peril."

She had the air of a Medea as she spoke. Her proud head was raised in half-moonacious grace that gave a charm even to its haughtiness, and her dark eyes seemed piercing into the very depths of her companion's heart, waiting but for the confession that should justify her verdict.

Victor's conscience was perhaps scarcely stainless enough to obey the dictates of his pride and his generosity.

Alas! he knew full well that the love of his youth was deep—deep in his soul, and that he would even now have forgiven, forgotten all could he but have clasped his faithless Irene to his bosom and called her his own fair bride.

But honour and gratitude forbade the impetuous impulse to cast off the fetters that he had forged round his very thoughts and actions, and his answer was noble and forbearing.

"Celia, you are perhaps right in these compliments, your contempt for my credulity, your resentment for my vacillation, my apparent ingratitudes; yet I am not unworthy of your trust. I am your accepted suitor, I have a deep and lasting debt of gratitude for your generosity in thus yielding up your heritage for my sake. And, Celia, I am yours and yours only, and when once the vows are spoken that shall bind us together I swear to you that I will never allow one thought of Irene to come between my bride and myself as a dark shadow. I will never permit one glance at her fair features to conjure up the memory of what I once believed her—and was deceived. Bear with me, Celia; if there are moments when I recall the past, and think of the bond which united us in our earliest days, it does but throw out your image in stronger relief, as I contrast your noble truth with her falsehood."

His voice softened at the last words.

He cast his arm round the moulded waist that was displayed in its faultless proportions by her close-fitting habit, and drew her, half-resisting, towards him.

"Forgive me, Celia; be indulgent as you are generous. I know I am unworthy of you in all things—I have not even an untouched, undivided heart to give in return for your love and your possessions. Yet you shall not repent your choice, Celia, if a life's devotion can repay my debt."

A succession of passions had swept like a torrent of many waters over the girl's splendid features as Victor spoke.

There was a natural gust of resentment and pique and regret in the first troubled working of her features.

But there was a strange, wild questioning—a kind of uneasy alarm—in her dark eyes which could scarcely be so easily explained, and which had her lover been less engrossed he would have been perplexed to read.

"Victor," she whispered as she permitted his lips to touch her flushed cheek, "I scarcely know whether I am acting as I ought in pardoning your confessed inconstancy. I ought perhaps to bid you leave me for ever. I ought to break every link between us and give this poor hand and rich dower to one of the many who seek its possession. But I am too weak—I love you, Victor, and I cannot bear the pang—unless, indeed, you drive me too far, wound me too deeply. Then you may find that I have the blood of my ancestors in my veins and their spirit in my soul. Victor, for both our sakes beware. I have said all now in that one word. And now," she added, with a total change of manner, and assuming a light and joyous tone all different from her stately moods, "sir laggard, begin your new term of service by the most rapid toilet that ever knight made at the bidding of his lady. I am doomed even now to meet the wrath of old Jenkins at our delay. He considers the horses at the Rookery of far more importance than his heiress."

Victor gave a slight, unsatisfied laugh.

"To speak the truth, Celia, I have often thought you gave Jenkins too much liberty in ruling your arrangements; although he may be an old servant of the family he is but a steward—a domestic who ought to be fully under your control."

Celia flushed strangely.

Perhaps she resented the interference with her pleasure where her own household was concerned.

"You forget, Victor, that Jenkins has known me since I was in the nursery, and as I am not much more than a quarter his age there is nothing so very wonderful in the harmless freedom that shocks you so terribly. At any rate to oblige me you will perhaps be as quick as possible, for the morning is rapidly passing away with all these philosophical discussions."

The young man disappeared without another word, and Celia sank down on the chair he had just quitted.

There was a total change in her whole mien and expression as the door closed behind her relative.

A sharp pang of suppressed agony contracted her brow as she gazed at Irene's portrait, in its sweet, girlish beauty, and then gave a hasty survey of her own figure in the massive pier glass that covered the wall between the French windows at either end.

"I hate her, I hate her," she said, in a low, meaning tone, that she perhaps did not even perceive escaped her lips. "And he loves her still; yes, in spite of all she has that triumph. Yet I have worked well. She was younger than myself by sufficient years to give her a superior chance—she was the only child and heiress of a doting father and the beloved of the supposed heir of the Vyvians of the Rookery. And I—I was a portionless orphan, the dependent on an estranged relation's bounty, with nothing but my own strong will and the queenly beauty that was so ill suited to my position and my means. The race was an unequal one, but I have won it, or at least I am near the goal. Irene is blind, suffering, hopeless, and divided from him she loves. Victor is the very slave of my will, relying on me for the heritage that was supposed to be his right, and my betrothed husband. Yes, Celia Vyvian is the proud heiress of some ten thousand per annum, and the affianced of him she so madly and it seemed so hopelessly loved. Have I not cause to triumph and to rejoice?"

The door had softly opened as she pronounced the last words, and a man of powerful frame, but with almost unnatural sparseness of outline, and a snake-like glitter in his deep-set light-brown eyes, was almost at her side ere she was aware of his entrance.

"Perhaps you will be so good as to sign this cheque before you go out, since you appear likely to be so late, Miss Vyvian," he said, with a thinly

veiled imperiousness of tone. "It will not suit me, at any rate, to have things so irregular, and should it continue I shall ask you to make different arrangements for my future residence. However, this is what I want just now," he added, presenting a piece of paper (which had been already filled up save the signature of the rightful owner of the magic draft).

Celia looked at it in a kind of dismay.

"Jenkins, this is monstrous," she said. "It is simply out of the question that you can want such a sum as this for one month's expenses."

The man frowned ominously, even while his tone was smooth and bland.

"I think you forget, Miss Vyvian. There was a debt to be discharged besides the actual current expenditure of the household, and it comes for the time—for the time, you understand—to the sum I have put down there."

Celia hastily wrote the name to the heavy cheque that certainly justified the demand which she had ventured to make.

"This imposition must have an end, Jenkins," she said, sharply. "There is no time now, but when I am at leisure I shall insist on a final settlement of the claims you make. I agree with you that some new arrangement should be made for your future residence, Jenkins. A master will scarcely tolerate the insolence to which I have been weak enough to submit."

"Unless he was governed by the same iron law—necessity, young lady," replied the steward, with a significant nod, as he pocketed the cheque. "You had better school him in time, lest you find when too late that 'knowledge is power.' However, we will speak of this later. I hear him coming on the wings of love—or gold—twere pity to clip them ere they are well grown, Miss Celia."

And with an insolent laugh the steward retired from the presence of the proud and chafing mistress, whom he had thus taunted to the very boiling heat of her fiery and outraged spirit.

CHAPTER V.

As yet she undetermined lies

Which she her spouse shall call.

Wretched, and only wretched he

To whom that lot shall fall!

For if her heart aught I see,

She means to please them all.

OSWALD JENKINS took his way from the presence of his young mistress with an eager step that was scarcely consistent with his years, and was certainly quickened by one of the three passions that are presumed to actuate mankind in the different stages of life—love, resentment or cupidity—or it might be a mingling of the tangled web of such emotions.

He traversed the hall and corridors that led to the back staircases, which were presumed to belong to the domestics for their transit through the house, without pausing for a moment in his course.

And in a few brief minutes he stood by the door of a room that opened on a kind of angle between the servants' apartments and the principal suites of the spacious building.

He gave a slight tap at the door and, without waiting for response, entered a well-furnished and cheerful room tenanted by a young and decidedly handsome woman, who at the moment was turning her face from the window to the table, which was covered with various articles of female apparel and implements of female employment.

Jenkins walked straight to the window at which the young woman was sitting, as if to trace the object of her curious gaze.

"So you have been watching your lady and her suitor out of sight, Laura," he said, with a bland smile, seating himself at the side of the table, before a fire that seemed scarcely visible in the large oak-panelled room, even on that bright, genial day. "Pray what did you think of them as they rode off together?"

Laura gave a coquettish toss of her head as her bright, shrewd eyes met her companion's earnest gaze.

"What should I think, Mr. Jenkins, except that they are a very handsome pair, well suited to each other in every respect?"

"Are you sure of that, my pretty Laura?" asked the steward, smiling. "You are sharp enough, I confess, in the usual way. Could you not guess any discrepancy between the heiress and her cousin that might chance to interfere with their dove-like billing and cooing?"

"Well, really I cannot tell, Mr. Jenkins," returned the sublimely with a coquettish glance from under her thick eyelashes. "Mr. Mordant and my young lady are both well born and handsome and young, and, I suppose, very fond of each other. I don't understand much of their affairs, but I should think that was all as it should be, Mr. Jenkins. Unless," she added, with a quick glance, that proved she was scarcely such an ignoramus as she affected. "It may be that she has the chief of the money, Mr. Jenkins, and they do

say the money and the age should be on the gentleman's side, you know."

"And if he has the love too, my jewel," returned Jenkins, drawing his chair nearer to Laura's, and gazing down into her face, "why, then it must be all as it should be. Don't you think so?"

Laura did not seem to hear.

Her eyes were apparently fixed on a glossy satin robe that she was busily arranging, and Jenkins resumed:

"Thus, when he has neither it's all as it should not be, Laura, which, I take it, is pretty much the case with the gay bridegroom that is to be."

The pretty abigail did condescend to look up now in genuine curiosity.

"I don't understand, Mr. Jenkins," she exclaimed, eagerly. "And what's more I've often wondered at many things that I didn't comprehend about Mr. Victor and Miss Celia. How was it he didn't get his uncle's money? and who is that beautiful girl whose picture I've caught him looking at when I've gone in for my lady in a hurry—I mean in the morning-room, you know? There, tell me all about it, there's a dear old duck," she added, coaxingly. "I will know, so you may as well tell me at once."

"But a woman can't keep a secret, you see; and it wouldn't do to tattle about those hushed-up affairs," he returned, doubtfully regarding the sharp, shrewd eyes that spoke of no ordinary strength and acuteness in the intriguing brain.

Laura laughed scornfully.

"And, pray, to whom should I tell it?" she said, with a light laugh. "Do you suppose I demean myself by chatting in the servants' hall to that deaf old Mrs. Grimston? I know if you cannot trust me I cannot trust you, that's certain; so you can do as you please, Mr. Jenkins," she added, occupying herself resolutely with her work, and turning away from him as if in utter contempt of his presence.

"There, you're a nice little tyrant," said the steward, deprecatingly—"as handsome a vixen as ever had a poor fellow in the coils. However, I suppose you must have your way till you're promised to love and obey, you see, my wilful daniel."

"That's as may be, Mr. Jenkins. The day may never come, you see, for, as you said just now, there's something that's not as it should be between us. You're old enough to be my father, and—"

"I'm fond enough to spoil you like one," returned the steward, admiringly. "There, shut your pretty lips and I'll tell you all about it—at least so far as folks know," he added, cautiously.

He bent forward as he spoke, and essayed, despite her averted face, to snatch a hasty kiss from the ruby, full lips, in token of restored amity, and, thus reassured and bribed, he began his promised tale.

"You see, Laura," he said, in a low, deliberate tone, "I have been in the Vyvian family since I was a boy, and the late Mr. Charles and his brother Arthur and Mr. Victor's mother, Miss Blanche, were all young and gay and handsome as any young folks need be when I first came to the Rookery. But after a while things grew worse between them. Master Charles and his brother quarrelled, some said from jealousy in love, some from a gambling transaction that threatened to bring the family name and property into disrepute. Any way there was a terrible dispute, and Mr. Arthur went away and never came back alive, though after his death his corpse and Miss Celia—then a strange, untrained, overbearing young creature of sixteen—were brought to the old home for Mr. Charles to receive and pardon as he best could. I say pardon, Laura, for it's often that the anger against the parent descends to the child, and I shall never forget the day when Miss Celia first stood before her uncle with those dark, big eyes of hers all defiant and full, saying 'Uncle, my father bade me come to his ancestors' home for kindness and shelter. If I found neither he said I was to leave it with his corpse resting on it and its lord. Shall I go or stay?'"

"Mr. Charles looked at the girl for a minute and his white face worked, as if he was going to have a fit. Then he held out his hand and said, calmly: 'Celia Vyvian, from this day the Rookery is your rightful home. Stay.'"

"Well, time went on. Mr. Victor used to come here from time to time from college and travel, and it was always supposed that he was to be the heir, and, if it could be arranged, the husband of Miss Celia. But the youth wouldn't hear of it; he was the very slave of Sir Hugh Delaney's only child, Miss Irene, whose picture hangs in the dining-room, and as she would have a fine fortune and was his equal in birth and the prettiest girl in the country round it was hard to find fault with his choice. But, as it turned out, it seems that my master was deeply incensed at his resistance, though he was not one to talk of his intentions or his feelings, wasn't Mr. Charles. He was reserved and silent and cold as a statue, and if any one knew what he thought about the matter it was

only Mr. Victor and Miss Celia themselves, and no one else.

"Well, it fell out strange enough that Sir Hugh went abroad for Miss Irene's health only a very few months before my master died, and Mr. Victor was away also, gone to settle some affairs of his father's in the West Indies, which turned out badly enough, I fancy, and finished off his prospects in that quarter. But, when Mr. Charles was taken ill, rather suddenly as it turned out, Miss Celia was alone with him, and certainly she did her duty. No daughter could have been more attentive to him night and day than she was—as perhaps was but natural after seven years of care and shelter at his hand. And when the funeral was over and the will opened she had her reward, so she said, for Mr. Victor was out off with a mere pit-tace and Miss Celia was left sole heiress of the estates and all the possessions of her family."

Laura had listened eagerly, drinking in every word, as the steward slowly uttered them.

Now she broke in for the first time.

"And he jilted Miss Delancy for the sake of the heritage?" she asked, scornfully.

"Well, not exactly; besides, Miss Delancy broke off with him, after he became penniless as you might call it, and then Miss Celia and he made up old quarrels, and got betrothed. If he has a hankering after his old love, well, he's an idiot or knave, or both should not you say, under the circumstances, Laura?"

There was a peculiar glance shot from under the steward's bushy eyelids as he spoke that did not escape the sharp eye of the shrewd abigail.

"Oh, of course, it was very kind of Miss Celia," she said, with a smile. "And he ought to be very grateful. Pray was the will made when Mr. Vyvian was so very ill, Mr. Jenkins?" she asked, with admirable affectation of innocence.

"No, by no means. It was found in his secret drawer, and was dated some three months back," returned the steward. "No doubt he repented his quarrel with his brother's son. Yes, and wished the estates to go in the line, though it was to a woman, my pretty Laura. As Mr. Victor threw away his chance, it was no fault of my master's, and it has all come right at last, or will when the wedding comes off, and perhaps another after it, eh, Laura?"

He tried to take the girl's hand as he spoke, but she drew it away with a thoughtful, half-impatient air, as if her mind was engrossed with far other and more interesting cogitations.

"If Miss Irene served Mr. Victor as you say, he is an idiot to care about her," she said, musingly. "If Miss Celia has been as generous and kind, he is a knave not to care for her. It's a strange tangle, Mr. Jenkins. I've not been here a twelvemonth, but I've not had my eyes shut. You've opened them wider still," she added, with a laugh that sounded unpleasantly to the steward's ear.

"If?" he said, "if? What does that mean, my lass?"

"It means what it says, Mr. Jenkins," she replied, calmly. "It means 'if.'"

(To be continued.)

A CENTENARIAN.—There is now living at Laymore, a hamlet a few miles from Bridport, in Dorsetshire, an old lady who is now in her 101st year. She was born on May 1, 1772, and married a man named Stanton in 1797, who died about sixteen years ago. Mrs. Stanton has a small army of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren scattered more or less throughout the globe. She retains all her faculties, with the exception of being rather deaf. She is also a great smoker; even in bed the pipe is her companion.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM AT RINGWOOD.—A thunderstorm of unparalleled violence broke over Ringwood on Friday afternoon, Jan. 3. The congregational Chapel was struck by lightning, and a large amount of damage done. One of the pinnacles of the building was shattered, and a portion of the heavy masonry precipitated through the roof. The front windows were smashed, and the clock-case and the weights thrown to the farther end of the interior by the force of the concussion. A portion of the pipes connected with the heating apparatus was broken to atoms, and some damage done to the sittings, the woodwork being split up like firewood. The damage done is estimated roughly at about 160*l*. The storm passed away in a northerly direction.

TABLE MANNERS.—Our Saxon ancestors had some rude customs about their meals which are in striking contrast with modern refinement. To begin with, they had no table, but, instead of one, a board (*bord*) which was brought out for the occasion from some place of storage, laid on trestles, and when the meal was ended carefully put away again. This is called "laying the board," to which our similar expression owes its origin; and from the same source comes our word "boarder"—one who sits at the board to

eat. The guests and family were summoned by a horn, and after they were seated the cloth was spread; and about this they were extremely particular; but of what kind of fabric it was made does not appear. It was not linen, for that was not introduced into England for such use until the reign of Elizabeth. For a long time carpets and pieces of tapestry did service as coverings for tables. After the cloth—or carpet—was arranged the salt-cellar was set on, then the knives (if they were so fortunate as to have any) were placed, the spoons, the drinking-horns and the trenchers. The salt-cellar was the most important article of all—very large, and made with a cover. It is this last peculiarity which Shakespeare alludes to where he makes Lancelot say: "The cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt." It was made of solid silver where the host could afford it, elaborately chased: often a very substantial piece of plate, as costly as his means would allow. And this accounts for the greed with which Queen Elizabeth once seized upon one, on the occasion of visiting a certain great official; she had already received valuable gifts from him, but before her departure she—"took a salt, a spoon, and a fork of fair agate."

DREAMS.

'Tis sweet to lose in soothing sleep
The numerous cares that try us;
And, when sunk in slumbers deep,
What phantoms will flit by us.
What reckless flights the fancy takes,
When soaring unconfined,
It skims o'er rivers, seas, and lakes,
And soon leaves leagues behind.
Oblivious to the world, the head
In blissful rest dreams on,
And cares but little for the bed
That it may lie upon.
The beggar dines on dainty fare,
The king forgets his power,
And rich and poor alike can share
The pleasures of each hour.
The maiden feels her lover's lips
Pressed fondly to her own,
Till from her time unnoticed slips,
And the delusion's flown.
The little child glides swift along
On toys, created fairy like,
Until their varied morning song
The deep-toned clocks begin to strike.
Ye theatres of the busy brain,
Whose griefs depress, or joys delight,
Whose ever-changing scenes contain
A life-time in one single night,
What are ye, and from whence received?
Your mysteries I would explore,
For Superstition has conceived
You guard the unknown future's
door. A. D. P.

SCIENCE.

SPECTRUM OF THE AURORA.—Vogel has determined that the spectrum of the aurora may with great probability be regarded as a modification of the air spectrum, the variability of the spectra of gases under different circumstances of temperature and pressure being well established.

THE BLUE COLOUR OF THE SKY.—A curious cause is assigned by M. Collas for the blue colour of the sky. In opposition to M. Lallemand, who attributes the colour to a fluorescent phenomenon—a reduction of refrangibility in the actinic rays beyond the violet end of the spectrum—M. Collas maintains that the colour is due to the presence of hydrated silica in a very finely divided state carried into the atmosphere with the aqueous vapour. The blue colour of the Lake of Geneva is referred to a similar cause.

VOICE OF FISHES.—At a recent meeting of the Académie des Sciences M. Charles Robin read a report on the investigations of M. Dufosse relating to the production of voice in certain fishes. The swimming-bladder appears to be the principal agent in producing voice, at least in those fishes in which that organ has an opening into the oesophagus; and even in those in which it is a shut sac it acts as a sounding-board in augmenting the sound produced by other parts. That it is not exclusively the cause of vocal sounds is shown by the circumstance that some fish are destitute of a swimming-bladder, and are yet capable of producing distinct musical sounds.

CEMENT.—To produce a hard, durable, and quickly setting cement, W. McKay, of Ottawa, Canada, makes a compound of marl, or oyster shells, clay, road dust, wood or coal ashes (or equivalent alkalies), sand,

soluble or other glass, or any one or more of the silicious ingredients, any one or more of the metallic oxides, carbonate of magnesia, or calcined magnesian rock. All the above-mentioned ingredients, with the exception of soluble glass, and ashes or alkalies, are mixed together with water and ground to a powder in a mortar mill or by any convenient process, after which the whole is brought to a liquid state by the addition of water. The compound is then run into tanks and left to precipitate. When the precipitation has taken place the excess of water is withdrawn, and the ashes or alkalies are added and thoroughly mixed and incorporated with the compound. The whole is then dried either by artificial heat or in the open air, after which it is thoroughly calcined and ground to an impalpable powder in a flour mill or by any other process. The soluble glass, previously powdered, is then added and incorporated with the compound, which is ready for use in the same manner as other hydraulic or plastic cements.

THE LATEST DISCOVERIES IN THE POLAR REGIONS.

ALTHOUGH the North Pole has not yet been reached notable progress has recently been made in the exploration of the zone of which it is the centre. During the summer of last year several voyages were accomplished, and of the results thereby determined we are now learning the particulars.

Dr Augustus Petermann, the eminent German geographer, has received advices, via Norway, that the land at the east of the islands of Spitzbergen, of which the position has frequently changed on the charts during the past two centuries, has at last been reached, and that, during the month of August last, it was thoroughly explored by Captain Nils Johnsen, of Tromsøe. Another Norwegian captain, Altmann, of Hammerfest, although reaching the same locality, failed to make observations of any importance, so that it was reserved for Captain Johnsen to complete the work. He left Tromsøe for the fisheries of Nova Zembla in the yacht "Lydians" with a crew of nine men. At the beginning of June, says Dr. Petermann, he shaped his course toward the western part of the vast sea which extends between the islands of Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla. During the latter part of the same month he arrived some 80 kilometres to the south-east of the Ryk Islands (a little group off the east coast of Spitzbergen) and in the midst of a great polar current that transports enormous quantities of ice toward the eastern shores of the Spitzbergen and Bären Islands. In the following July and August the ice current turned more to the eastward, leaving the western half of the sea comparatively clear. Captain Johnsen, who meantime was making large hauls of fish on the great Spitzbergen banks, suddenly discovered on the afternoon of the 16th of August that he had been carried to over 78 deg. north latitude, and shortly after perceived the land which it is believed appears on the charts of 1617 under the name of Wiche or Gillis Land. Finding the sea open on the east and south-east shores of this island, Johnsen anchored his vessel near the north-east point, at latitude about 79 deg. north, and disembarked in order to explore the surroundings, to ascend a mountain near the coast, and also to obtain a supply of the wood which he saw in enormous quantities on the beach. The main island he found to be accompanied by others smaller in extent. On no portion of the land could extended snowfields be seen. One glacier was visible on the south-east coast, while numerous streams of clear water were apparent.

The length of the island between its farthest points was determined to be 44 marine miles. The drift-wood had accumulated in vast heaps hundreds of feet from the shore, and as high as twenty feet above the sea level. The principal animals inhabiting the polar regions were observed, and especially the Greenland seal, which appeared in great numbers. The explorers evince considerable surprise at the reindeer, which they state are fatter and larger in size than any they had ever seen. On the back of one of these animals fat was found of over three inches in thickness. Specimens of argillaceous and quarziferous rock were collected and with some fossil vegetation forwarded to museums in Europe for examination. On the evening of the 17th of August Johnsen departed, following the southern and south-eastern shores of the island. There was no ice except on the north coast, while in a north-easterly direction the sea was open as far as the eye could reach. Regarding the Austrian expedition of Payer and Wiegrecht we have news as late as the 16th of August. At that date the expedition was near the Isle of Barentz, 70 deg. 7 sec. north latitude and 58 deg. 24 sec. longitude east of Paris. There is little of novelty communicated other than that the temperature of the sea, as taken, verifies the figures adopted by Dr. Petermann on the charts. "Much thick ice has been encountered," says M. Payer, "but with the aid of steam we have no difficulty in penetrating it."



THE GOLDEN LURE.

CHAPTER I.

This fell sorcerer, Death, Shakespeare.
Is strict in his arrest.

THE lofty spires and quaint high turrets of the dim old cathedral town glittered brightly in the rays of the September sunshine.

The rustling leaves of the distant forest were turned into quivering pennons of gold, and the blue waters of the sea sparkled like waves of liquid silver as the flickering sunbeams danced over the fair expanse.

Down the principal street of the quiet town lumbered a queer, old-fashioned chaise, to which was attached an attenuated white horse, and a funny little man in a big white coat and tall hat sat perched on the box, urging the animal forward with the united force of reins and lungs, and the occasional flourish of a frayed-out whip that swayed to and fro from the corner of the box.

Down the sunny street they came, not a few people stopping and giving the strange vehicle a curious stare as it passed along, straight on, down to the red-brick house, where a dingy sign announced, in faded letters:

"ADAM BROWNELL, Attorney."

"Is the master in?" asked the old man, in a shrill voice, of the lad who stood near the office door.

"He is."

The man in the white coat clambered slowly from his box, and walked into the hall.

The lad fastened the horse to the post, and, throwing open the office door, announced, in a loud voice: "A gentleman, sir."

The office was a bare but clean-looking room. The floor was carpetless, and the windows were without curtains; but both floor and windows were spotless and pure as hands could make them.

A tall stool stood near the door, and a heavy bookcase, filled with great leather-covered volumes, occupied one corner, while in an arm-chair before the writing-desk sat a middle-aged man, with iron-gray hair and eyes completely shaded by a pair of great gold-rimmed spectacles.

He looked up quietly as his visitor entered, and motioned him to a seat on the high stool.

"You are a lawyer?" said the stranger, in an inquiring tone.

"I am."

The voice of the attorney was clear, and the tone pleasant.

"My master is ill unto death, and has need of you,

[THE WILL.]

I have come to take you to him, and he bids me say that no fee you may ask will be too much if you will only come."

The attorney looked at the servant man with a smile.

"And pray who may your master be?" he asked.

"He is John Marsh, of Marshmellow Hall, ten miles away," replied the old man, in a querulous tone, buttoning his long white coat from skirt to throat.

"Ah!" The lawyer's eyes brightened, and a look of interest beamed over his face. "So? Of course I will."

He arose, wiped his pen, and, putting aside his papers, took up his hat.

"He wants his will made, I think," ventured the servant man.

"So I suppose," replied Brownell. "I will be prepared."

He secured the necessary articles, and, leaving the office in charge of the boy, got into the chaise. The servant man unfastened the horse, climbed up on the driver's box, and turned the animal in the direction he had come.

The genial lawyer smiled good-humouredly as the rickety old vehicle jolted heavily over the road.

"It will be nothing less than a miracle if this old rattle-trap don't fall to pieces ere long, and spill me out on the ground," he thought as they began the descent of a steep hill, and the heavy top of the conveyance swayed noisily from side to side.

The shadows were long and dark on the sward, and the purple twilight began to steal softly over the green earth, ere they came in sight of the Hall.

The gray walls towered up blackly against the sky, and the high, irregular roofs frowned grimly down on the occupants of the old chaise.

Brownell could scarcely repress a shudder as the servant man shoved him in.

Peters took him straight up to his master's room, and, opening the door, ushered him into the apartment.

"You are awfully late," whined the old man as Peters approached the couch. "I told you to hurry."

"So I did; but the horse was poor and old, and I could not make him go faster," replied Peters, in a cringing tone, smoothing the hand lying on the counterpane. "I have fetched a lawyer—Mr. Adam Brownell."

"Adam Brownell!" repeated Marsh, in a musing tone. "Oh, yes, I remember! Mr. Adam Brownell, come here."

The lawyer stepped forward, and looked calmly down into the face on the pillows before him. The

broad forehead was wrinkled and drawn; the once luxuriant dark hair was now thin and white, and the proud, scornful eyes were becoming glazed with death.

John Marsh was slowly but surely approaching the dark, deep waters.

Even now the pale ferryman was waiting to ferry him across that silent sea, and the lawyer knew that what was to be done must be done quickly, or it would be too late.

The eyes of the dying man scanned him eagerly.

"How long think you I shall live?" he asked.

Brownell hesitated.

"The truth, man—the truth!" cried Marsh, impatiently.

Thus adjured, the lawyer replied:

"Fifteen minutes—perhaps twenty—but not over a half-hour."

Marsh groaned.

"Get your paper, man! I must have it done, and that speedily!" he cried out, with a sudden burst of vehemence, clutching the bedclothes tightly. "The will must be made!"

Adam drew up the writing-desk, and, trimming the night-lamp, dipped his pen in the ink and wrote out the usual formula of a will.

Then he paused.

"I, John Marsh, of Marshmellow Hall, being of sound mind, do hereby give and bequeath to my servant man, Peters, the sum of ten pounds, to be used as he shall see fit," dictated Marsh, in a distinct voice.

"To my maid, Sarah Austin, I give and bequeath the sum of twenty pounds, for her own private benefit."

Then there was silence.

The dying man was evidently considering a point in his own mind.

"To my companion, Ernest Ingersol, I give the sum of one hundred pounds and the black horse, Dan, in return for his services. Moreover, he shall have the diamond ring now on my hand and the collection of books in the library. The ring shall be taken from my finger as soon as I am dead, and placed upon his own, and he shall wear it evermore, in memory of his dead friend, John Marsh."

There was a slight rustling of the heavy curtains, and the sharp ears of the quiet lawyer detected something that sounded suspiciously like an imprecation.

He looked up, but save the presence of the servant man he was alone with his client.

"The rest and residue of my effects, consisting of Marshmellow Hall, and the sum of one hundred thousand pounds in bank, with my blessing, I fully and

freely give to my only relative, Jane Brent, or if she be dead to her heir or heirs, to be held by her or them now and evermore.

"Moreover, as I am not aware of the present whereabouts of the said Jane Brent, I set aside a purse of gold, containing one thousand pounds, now in the upper drawer of my writing-desk, to be used by Adam Brownell, attorney, in discovering any lawful heir or heirs.

"Advertisements shall be inserted in all the leading papers, and whosoever shall be the first to bring to the said Adam Brownell reliable information of the said Jane Brent or heirs shall have paid to him or her, as the case may be, a no less amount than fifty pounds.

"However, after the expiration of two years and a day, if the said Jane Brent or heirs fail to make her or their appearance, and there be no news of them whatever, I declare it to be my wish that my friend Ernest Ingersol shall thereafter claim and receive for five years all rents and interest money that shall accrue from Marshmellow lands, and the bank account, to be used by him as he shall best please.

"Moreover, if after the lapse of five years the said heir or heirs be not yet found, the one hundred thousand pounds and Marshmellow Hall shall be claimed by the said Ernest Ingersol, and the money and deeds be duly made his.

"Lastly, I desire that when I am dead my body shall be properly embalmed and laid in the stone sarcophagus, now standing in the lower vault of Marshmellow Hall, and that prayers shall be said for one month in the chapel for my departed soul.

"JOHN MARSH, Gentleman."

After it was duly witnessed and signed the lawyer drew the blotting-paper over it, tied it up with a piece of red tape, and slipped the document with the purse of gold in his pocket.

Then he glanced at his employer.

The cold perspiration was standing out on his forehead, and his eyes were set, but his lips moved convulsively as though even yet there was something more to be accomplished.

The lawyer bent his head low to listen, but the words were inaudible.

Five minutes later and the flickering rays of the night lamp shone dimly on the ghastly face of the dead.

Brownell, with the assistance of the servant man, straightened the rigid limbs, closed the broad lids down over the wide, staring eyes, and folded the thin hands above the quiet heart.

Then, summoning Ingersol, with noiseless steps he went out to the stable, and, saddling a horse, returned to town.

The lights were nearly all extinguished, and the clock rang out the hour of twelve as he reached his office door. He sent the horse to the inn-stable, and went into the house.

Placing the will and purse of gold in a small iron box he put the key under his pillow and got into bed.

"Singular," muttered the lawyer as he dropped to sleep, "very singular that so rich a man as John Marsh should live so poorly, and die almost alone, as he has lived and died."

Left alone with the dead, Ingersol turned down the sheet and looked scornfully at the rigid face of his late friend.

A sneer curled his thin lips as he noticed the diamond ring that glittered brilliantly in the lamp light, and, raising the rigid hand, he jerked the sparkling gem from its resting-place, and fitted it on his own finger with a mocking laugh.

"It's worth a cool five hundred," he muttered, "and I'll take it now. Oh, the miserly spirit that bequeathed me only a hundred pounds when a sea of yellow gold lay stored away in bank. To think that I have served through all these tiresome years for so paltry a sum as that. And Jane Brent, some old scarecrow at best, inherits all these broad Marshmellow lands and the hundred thousand pounds besides."

Ingersol ground his teeth with rage.

"Two years and a day must elapse ere I receive the rents and interests—and not then if Jane Brent should appear. May she have been taken to her rest many years ago, leaving behind no child to claim the mother's due and to cheat me from my just reward."

Up and down the room, all unmindful of the long, stark figure whose outlines were sharply defined under the white sheet, he paced, planning, hoping and fearing.

"But something will surely happen to send Jane Brent here," he cried, bitterly, throwing himself into the arm-chair. "Oh, that I had the power to suppress the advertisements, then all would be well. A thousand furies seize Adam Brownell ere he sends the fatal reward to print."

So he raved until morning; and then, having a care for his personal appearance, he summoned

Peters to sit with the dead master, while he bathed his face and hands and refreshed himself with a quiet stroll.

The embalmers came, sent by the command of the lawyer, the funeral service was read, and the body was placed in the stone coffin in the vault.

When all was over Brownell gave the keys of the house into Ingersol's keeping.

"They are yours till we find Jane Brent," he said, with a smile, as Ingersol reached out his hands to receive them.

"I know—I know," returned Ernest, bitterly. "She shall have her own—when she comes."

Time passed on, and throughout the country the lawyer was busily searching for the missing heirs, and hardly a newspaper appeared but what had, in a conspicuous position, the advertisement:

50*l*. REWARD.

The above reward will be paid, in gold, to any person, male or female, who will send to the undersigned the address of Jane Brent, sister of the late John Marsh, gentleman, or, if dead, the address of her heir or heirs.—ADAM BROWNELL, Attorney, Chichester.

Ingersol raged inwardly as he saw the staring notice; but he was powerless to suppress it and forced to submit to the tide of circumstances as beat he could.

Six months passed, and yet Brownell got no tidings of the one he was seeking.

He bit his lips and looked grave, but was not discouraged.

Ingersol as weeks glided by gathered hope. Five-and-twenty years had gone by since all trace of Jane Brent was lost. What might not have occurred in that long time?

The old Hall when once he came in possession of the yellow gold now lying idle should glow with splendour. The ill-kept gardens should be one sea of undulating fragrance, and the old wine, now tightly corked in the damp wine vault below, should flow like streams of crimson gore at the wish of the happy guests.

He would travel and drink in the intoxicating loveliness of Italy. The gay French capital should serve his glowing tastes, and then he would cool his fevered mind in the holy air of Palestine.

Life should be one long, gilded dream, and when death came he would go out of the world with all the pomp and splendour that the most fashionable and artistic undertakers could devise.

Five years he must wait for his hundred thousand pounds, and the only event which could occur in the meantime to dash his glittering air castle to the ground would be the untimely appearance of Jane Brent.

He thought of her the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning.

The passing stranger was looked at with a jealous eye, and the occasional letter he received was opened with a sudden pang lest it should contain tidings of the owner of Marshmellow Hall.

CHAPTER II.

Now let us thank the Eternal Power—convinced That Heaven but tries our virtues by affliction, That oft the cloud that wraps the present hour Serves but to brighten all our future days.

Brown.

A PARTY of gay young students were merrily gossiping in the dissecting-room.

"It's Dodd's turn to-night to bring in the subject," they cried as a couple of old professors entered the apartment. "You know his womanish fears, gentlemen, and we insist that he shall do his duty this time."

Dodd, a slender, girlish-looking fellow, standing by the window, turned a shade paler than before.

"Is there no way for me to escape the dreadful thing?" he asked, piteously, of a grave and handsome man who entered in the wake of the two professors.

Doctor Evlin shook his head in the negative.

"We cannot let you off, Dodd. We must do justice to all the students, and therefore insist upon your bringing in to-night's subject. The vehicle is waiting at the door, and it is time that you were gone. You may select any two of your classmates to accompany you, and be sure that you return before one o'clock."

Dodd turned away. His lip quivered and something very like a tear dimmed his eyes; but there was no gainsaying the word of the chief, and, selecting Blair and Raynor to be his companions, he started off to the cemetery.

The clouds were flocking up thick and black over the blue expanse of heaven, and the distant sound of thunder came booming like the reverberation of some far-off cannon through the silent aisles of the forest. The wheels of the close-covered vehicle rattled over the rough road, but save themselves there was no one abroad in the vicinity.

"I know exactly where to look," said Raynor, in a subdued tone, as a vivid flash of lightning lit up the

scene and revealed the ghostly monuments that gleamed for a brief instant on their vision. "I was here to-day when they buried a girl that was found dead in her bed. They said she died from poison, or something of that kind—committed suicide, I think."

They clambered from the waggon, and, hitching the horses, got over into the yard. Raynor was the first to scale the fence.

"This is the direction," he said, in a whisper, leading the way; Blair and Dodd followed, carrying the pickaxe and shovel.

The moon shone for a brief instant through a rift in the great bank of clouds, and, thinking it best not to light the lantern yet, the students fell to work throwing the dirt from the grave.

Five—ten—fifteen—twenty minutes passed, then the shovel struck the box with a dull thud.

Dodd shuddered as if with an ague fit.

"Boys, I can't do it—I can't do it."

"You must," growled Raynor, deliberately lighting the dark lantern.

The steel screws that fastened down the cover glittered in the dim light, and to Dodd the very air seemed filled with ghosts. A heavy peal of thunder suddenly burst on their ears, and flash after flash of lightning brightened up the old cemetery, revealing the white, awe-struck faces of the students.

"Make haste, I tell you!" cried Raynor. "We don't want to stand here all night. Come, go to work."

Wiping the damp perspiration from his forehead, the terror-stricken Dodd bent over the coffin and wrenched off the lid.

Blair turned a sudden blaze of light fully upon it, and the students beheld a white, peaceful face, and waves of brown hair rippling off the fair brow lay in a shining mass down each side of the sunken cheeks.

Dodd gazed as if fascinated. To his excited imagination it seemed as though the long-fringed lids quivered, and something like a troubled sigh fluttered from the parted lips.

As he looked down on the calm face a few great drops of rain fell upon it, and the voice of Raynor broke the silence, urging him to hasten.

A shudder ran like an electric flash through his frame, but, overcoming his fear, he hastily snatched the corpse from the box, and, swinging it over his shoulder, started for the waggon, its arms swaying from side to side as he sped onward, and the long brown hair fluttering loosely in the wind.

The waggon was reached at last, and the unhappy Dodd, glad to get rid of his horrible burden, flung the body desperately on the straw and mounted the driver's seat.

Blair and Raynor lingered to fill up the empty grave, and then hastened on after their comrade.

They had scarcely taken their seats in the waggon when the storm burst upon them in all its fury, and the frightened horses, roaring and plunging, rushed madly over the road at a break-neck speed.

Dodd felt with horror the body roll against his feet as the waggon jolted swiftly along, and the cold perspiration stood out in beads on his face as the sharp flashes of lightning brightened up the night and revealed the long, white-covered thing in the bottom of the box.

"I shall study for some other profession," he muttered as they at last halted. "There is something in this tampering with the dead so repulsive that I will have no more to do with it."

The door was opened softly.

"Well, boys?"

It was the voice of Evlin, and the students sprang to the ground with alacrity.

"The best of success, sir," said Raynor, in a subdued whisper. "Dodd is a brick, and he'll come out all right yet, sir," he continued, with animation, giving Dodd a slap on the shoulder.

Evlin smiled.

"Come in, gentlemen," he said, hurriedly; "we have no time to lose. Dodd will follow us with the subject."

Once more Dodd lifted the light form in his arms, and with long strides carried it into the dissecting-room and laid it on the table, leaving the face covered.

Dr. Evlin hastily glanced at his surgical implements.

"Rather a stormy night, gentlemen," he said, pleasantly, as the three young men divested themselves of their dripping hats and coats, and sat down in their shirt sleeves—"a very stormy night, but we must consent to endure the ill and vexation of the body and spirit for the sake of science, which is a wonderful thing."

"Splendid subject!" he ejaculated, after going to the table and turning down the sheet that covered the dead. "You were fortunate in securing so perfect a one. She cannot have been dead long, for there are no signs of decomposition yet. Everything is in readiness, so we will proceed to business immediately, if you please."

The young men gathered eagerly round the table,

and, taking up the keen-edged, glittering knife, the professor made a slight incision in the delicate flesh. A bright crimson fluid dyed the shining steel blade as it was withdrawn.

Dr. Evlin laid down the knife with a startled look.

He felt the pulse, and then held a pocket-mirror over her lips.

A faint moisture appeared on the polished surface of the glass, and the eyelids quivered spasmodically.

"Some brandy, quick!"

Evlin moistened her lips from the flask, and a faint colour soon relieved the whiteness of her cheeks.

He chafed the pallid hands, and, holding them in his own warm palms, seemed to infuse some of his own healthy life into their sluggish veins. Then the bosom rose and fell, and a soft sigh was borne to the strained ears of the watchful professor, who, as he turned his head slightly, saw a pair of wide brown eyes staring blankly at him.

Dr. Evlin was excited.

Never in all the years he had served at his profession had he seen anything like this; to him it was literally coming back from the land of shadows, and he flashed a queer, inexplicable look at young Dodd, who stood breathlessly watching his exertions.

"Go to my room, Raynor—warm the sheets and have a hot fire; we'll soon fetch her round," said Evlin as the patient began to breathe regularly, and a soft perspiration covered the body.

The doctor carried the girl up into the little chamber, and laid her upon the couch, where, in a few minutes, she was resting comfortably. Then he returned to the chill dissecting-room.

"The cause of science must suffer to-night, gentlemen, but I fancy the cause of humanity has been served," he said, seating himself for a brief instant before his case of instruments. "Dodd's done a big thing—a very big thing—a something that not one of us will be likely ever to forget. But—" and the eccentric gentleman chuckled to himself, "don't get in the habit of doing the thing often, Dodd, because the next time I may not conclude to succour suffering femininity, but serve up the subject whether or not. Well, well, we'll let it pass. You know the old adage, 'There is never a great loss but what there is some small gain,' and so if we have lost a subject we have gained a patient."

After the students had retired Evlin returned to his charge, who still reclined upon the white pillows, a faint smile illumining her ghastly face as she noticed his appearance.

"It was very good of you," she gasped, "to do so much for me. I can never repay your kindness."

Evlin shook his finger at her playfully.

"Be quiet, child. You are not to talk yet awhile, I'd have you understand. Wait until morning, and I'll think about the matter then; for the present you must be still."

He mixed a powder, and she swallowed it without a murmur.

Only her sad eyes followed him with a queer, contented expression until the broad lids closed down over them, losing sight and consciousness in peaceful slumber, and a kind of happy smile crept over the thin, sorrowful face, making it almost beautiful in its repose.

Evlin watched her until the day broke, and the first bright beam of sunshine that streamed through the glass frames flooded the room with a golden glory, and awoke her with a start.

"How do you feel this morning?" he asked, as she opened her eyes.

Her voice sounded faint and far away as she replied: "I feel very well, but, oh, so weak!"

The eccentric surgeon left the apartment hastily, presently returning with some steaming coffee and toast.

"There," said he, complacently sitting down on the bed rail and beginning to feed her as if she were a babe. "We'll soon have you up and about again."

She ate in silence until the toast was finished, then as she turned back with a sigh Evlin spoke.

"Now, miss, if you will give me your address I will send tidings to your friends of your present welfare. It will place us in something of a dilemma to account for your rather unwarrantable appearance, but that makes no difference."

She turned her eyes upon him with a startled look. "Friends," said she, mournfully. "I have no friends."

Evlin was astonished.

"My dear girl, who are you and where do you live?" he asked, gently.

The reply was clear and concise.

"I am Jane Brent. Home I have none."

The surgeon whistled softly.

"Here's a go," he thought, as he paced the floor.

"What the deuce is a man to do in such a case as this, especially a staid old bachelor like myself? I'll be shot if I know."

He ran his white fingers distractedly through his handsome hair, his patient watching his motions curiously from her pillows.

At last he sat down beside her. Something must be done, for she would sit up presently, and would require more clothing than the thin dress which had served as her burial robe; besides, it was necessary to know more of her.

"Well, Miss Brent, for I take it that you are unmarried, how does it happen that you are without a home and destitute of friends?" he asked, in an apparently unconcerned tone.

"First assist me into the great chair yonder; I feel as though I had slept a hundred years, and to sit up would be beneficial to me, I think," she said, imperatively.

Evlin arranged the chair, and, lifting her from the couch, sat her down in the velvet cushions.

For the first time she seemed to notice her apparel, and looked at him earnestly and fearfully, as if demanding an explanation.

"I don't remember ever having worn this garment since my mother's death, two years ago," she said, at last, in a frightened tone, holding up the fleecy white fabric between her fingers. "What has happened that I should be tricked out in this singular and unwarrantable fashion?"

Evlin laid his fingers softly on her pulse—it was strong and full.

"I will tell you presently, when you have related your own story, and have given me all the particulars of the last few weeks," said Evlin.

"There is little to tell," she replied, bitterly. "I am Jane Brent, as I said before—nineteen years old, and utterly friendless. An exceedingly short history is mine, sir."

Something in the mournful voice affected him strangely.

"The briefest tales not unfrequently contain the most pathetic. Three paragraphs will hold the misery or happiness of a lifetime, and I find that those who have suffered the deepest rarely parade their woes to the yawning mouths of the public," returned the surgeon, pressing her hand.

Jane Brent was young and susceptible. The words and tone of the handsome doctor were not without their effect upon her, and, with a faint smile, she continued:

"To begin at the beginning, once there was a very romantic wedding in a quaint old town. The marriage was very much opposed by my mother's only relative, a brother; and my father, who was a clergyman, thinking distance and time would bring about a reconciliation, accompanied by his wife, went immediately as a missionary to India, hoping my uncle's heart would soften towards them. I was born there, and he was apprized of the fact, but my parents never received a line from him in return."

"Two years and a half ago we buried my father under the burning Indian sands, and sailed for England in the 'Ocean Bird'; but the ship went down, and, save myself and the mate, all on board were lost. I had a belt of money secured to my waist, with some valuable family papers, and, as long as the money lasted, I got along very well. Finally the money was gone, and I could find nothing to do."

"My landlady was clamoring for her just dues—dues I could not meet; and so, in my despair, I felt there was but one thing left me. I pawned a ring, the only jewel I possessed, and purchased what I supposed to be a deadly poison. I swallowed it, determining to rid the world of myself, and I am here. If this is Heaven it is a very singular Heaven. If this is earth I wonder much at the room I am in and the dress I have on. Nor do I remember ever having seen you before. It is all very odd to me now. You are a stranger, yet very kind."

She paused, then, looking the surgeon in the face, she asked, in a firm tone:

"Where am I, and how came I here?"

Evlin hesitated.

"Can you bear a great deal? Do you think you are strong enough to listen to a very unpleasant and terrible fact?"

Her eyes widened and grew intensely black.

"I can bear anything but suspense," she said.

"Well," remarked the surgeon, coolly, his fingers still clasping her wrist, "the other morning you were found in bed, to all external appearances a corpse, and buried accordingly. Last night, needing a subject for dissection, I despatched three young students to the cemetery for a body. They unearthed you, and brought you here. That's how you came. You are now occupying the room of Edward Evlin, surgeon, in the second storey of the medical college, and that's where you are. Now, then, are you satisfied?"

His tone was light, unconcerned, and gay; but underneath the half-flippant manner was an almost feverish desire to know how the patient would receive the singular story, and he noted the sharp,

spasmodic working of the features, as he concluded, with pain.

"Ten, twenty minutes passed; then she spoke."

"It is strange that I escaped from the fate I had provided for myself. Providence moves in a mysterious way, indeed, and there must be something for me to do yet—some niche that I must fill. I live, and thank Heaven that I do. The life that is now intrusted to my keeping I will never again try to destroy. Sir, you have my thanks."

A rain of tears bathed her pallid face, and a storm of sighs shook her frame.

Evlin waited until her sobs had subsided ere he spoke again.

"Miss Brent, I have formed a plan, which I submit for your approval, and it is this—Give me the number of your late residence, and I will get whatever articles you may have left there. Then I will open my house at Sandhill, and you shall mind it for me for so long a time as you may choose to stay. But in case you become dissatisfied with the situation, we will look around and find something else, so that you shall not feel obliged to remain longer than you care to stay. How does that suit you?"

She did not need time to ponder over the proposition, and was only too glad to do as he proposed.

She gave him the address he had asked for, and added:

"My things are there. I have little else than a brass-bound ebony box, in which I have some papers that may be of account some time. Bring that, and a change of wearing apparel. Let Mrs. Marshall retain the rest."

"I shall not forget, but to make assurance double sure I'll write the address in my memorandum-book," said he.

Evlin called at the house designated, and announced his errand without enlightening the landlady as to the events subsequent to the burial of Jane Brent.

"The poor thing died very sudden, and we was very much shocked to find her a cold, stark corpse in the mornin'," lamented Mrs. Marshall, wiping her eyes on a dingy pocket-handkerchief. "She was owin' me five pounds, too, for board, but I never expect to get the likes of it now—of course not."

Evlin shuddered, and put his hand in his pocket for his purse.

"But there's a beautiful shawl which I'd like to keep to remember the poor critter by—not that I'd ever wear it, sir; I'd only like it as a keepsake, as I said before."

"I could not think of your retaining anything belonging to your late lodger, madam. Bring me every article of hers, and I will pay you what she owed you," said Evlin, selecting a bank-note from the purse and tendering it to the landlady.

A smile broke in upon the undercurrent of her woe.

"Thank you, sir, thank you! I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure, and I'll get the young body's things with pleasure too," and wiping her eyes she came trotted briskly from the room.

The parcel was neither large nor heavy, and he deposited it easily in the light vehicle, and with a "Good-morning" to Mrs. Marshall drove off, determining in his own mind that it was a fine thing Jane Brent had changed her quarters.

Sandhill House was large, pleasant, and airy. The great bay windows faced a park, and a pleasant carriage drive was visible in the rear.

"I shall find it very nice," said Jane as they stopped at the entrance and looked up the long, cool avenue, lined on either side with tall old trees.

(To be continued.)

THE SECRET OF SCHWARZENBURG.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ELEVEN o'clock rang out in clear and vibrant peals through the great halls of Schwarzenburg, and the echoes among the groined arches took up the notes and flung them to and fro. Then as the last musical ring died away the solemn stillness dropped into a hush like that of the tomb. Not a fold of the faded old banners stirred, never one of the grim knights lifted his bronze spear or raised his helmeted head. But these were dead, dumb statues.

Where were the armed soldiers Harnberg had left pacing the slow, short round? Like the knights, except that they were stretched prone upon the floor, they made no gesture, they gave no sign of life.

Outside, along the bridge, below upon the bank, lay the dark figures, scattered here and there, with closed eyes and fast-locked brains.

If the trembling, foreboding captives could only have seen, have guessed how free the path was!

From roof to basement there was utter silence until the chime again announced the lapse of another hour, and told the arrival of the solemn noon of night.

Then a door was cautiously unclosed and Von Schubert, with a pale face that was almost ghastly beneath the flaring light of the candle he carried, stole forth and glided noiselessly from one floor to another. He smiled grimly as he counted over the fallen figures.

"Potent little drug!" he muttered; "how easy it has made our path."

Then he went on out into the star-lighted night, and made sure that the brandy had performed its mission there. Returning with the same cautious tread, for there were other sleepers over whose senses only healthful sleep had control, he went swiftly to Aubrey Dalberg, for Wirt Womberg had contrived to gain access to Von Schubert, had minutely explained to him the situation of affairs, and had gained the promise of his hearty co-operation.

"Go, prepare them to be in readiness, and take the food and wine they may sorely need to fortify them against the fatigue of the hasty journey before us all. We will follow shortly if you will return to guide us. Thank Heaven, our way is clear!" he whispered.

Aubrey seized the basket already prepared, and made his hasty but silent way to the picture gallery. Two motionless figures barred his path, but, stepping lightly over them, he gained the panel door, pressed the spring, and almost tumbled over old Wirt as he sprang through.

"Thank Heaven you have come!" whispered Wirt, seizing his hand and covering it with tears and kisses. "We are well nigh crazed with anxiety and suspense."

"I have brought you food, and the way of escape is all arranged," whispered back Aubrey. "Let us hasten to give the wine to my mother."

"She needs it sorely. The air is close and oppressive, and only a trifle has passed her lips to-day."

Von Schubert had sped back to his friends, and the baron and his daughter were ready with the small package of valuables which alone was to remind them in exile of their Schwarzenburg home, waiting for Aubrey's signal, when suddenly Von Schubert, with a gesture of despair, rushed to the window and listened.

What sounds broke the quiet of all around? He groaned in anguish as he listened. There were the even footfalls of a party of equestrians and the rumble of a carriage on the long bridge.

"The prince has come. Oh, Heavens! to lose all in the very moment of triumph!" he cried, bitterly. "Hear how swiftly they come. Ah, me, they have seen the sleeping sentinels and mistrust treachery. Quick! fly back to your beds. I must try to dissemble, to save the ruin of us all."

He ran hastily as he spoke and pounded vociferously upon the door he had been so careful to avoid.

"Hernberg, Hernberg, where are you? Waken! Here is some horrible plot. The men are all asleep. I was drugged myself!"

Hernberg came out, thrusting himself into his clothing. Von Schubert's agitated face might well deceive him.

"In the fiend's name what has happened?" he cried.

At that moment came the thundering assault upon the doors below.

"Ho, there, Hernberg! Von Schubert! Are you all dead? What ails the knaves that should be keeping watch?"

"If those prisoners have escaped I will shoot myself!" roared out Hernberg. "It is the prince! Von Schubert, what is to be done?"

"It may not be too late. I will admit them and do you rouse up your men, if any of them can be stirred out of the trance that seems to hold the guard here."

He took all possible time to remove the heavy bolts from the door.

The prince came in, striding past Von Schubert furiously.

"What drunken orgie is this? Your guards are stone dead, or brutally drunk, and I am kept waiting at the door."

"I know it, your highness. We have just discovered it. Hernberg will tell you it's no fault of the poor fellows, or of the keepers. We have all been drugged."

"Are the prisoners safe?"

"Yes, yes, your highness!" ejaculated Hernberg, joyfully, darting through the side door. "Oh, Von Schubert, we are in luck! I have been down myself and crept into the bridge passage. They are there. I hear them talking and just planning escape this very hour. I have put two of the prince's guard there to watch. We have them safe."

The angry countenance of the prince cleared. Von Schubert glancing at it saw that in the brief time since he had been gone it had grown purple and swollen.

"He has been drinking furiously," thought he; "either something very bad or very flattering has taken place."

The explanation soon came.

"It seems my fortunate star is shining," said the prince, in a tone of hilarious gaiety. "Hernberg, go out and assist my fair visitors to enter. I have two fair ladies in the carriage who are, no doubt, anxious for a glimpse of these stately walls. Nothing could have happened better had I had the whole ordering of events. I arrive in season to prevent my greatest prize from flying away again. Von Schubert, you remember the strange fellow craving admittance at my door? What think you? It was a worthy skipper who had brought over the lovely heiress for whom we have planned so tenderly. She was there at the port waiting in his ship. I gave him the gold he asked. You shall say if it was not well bestowed when you look upon the face of the young baroness. I throw she brings a maiden companion as fair and stately as herself. Bring them in, up to the gallery, Hernberg, and then drive up the hiding obdurate one who has taken refuge in the secret corridor."

He stalked on as he spoke, and Von Schubert mechanically followed, lighting the way with the candle he still held.

In a moment after Hernberg entered, and behind him, clinging to each other and glancing around in involuntary awe and admiration, for all their distress and terror, came—who but Leina and Serena!

So impressed were all with the momentous revelation at hand that as one after another of the sleepers roused up, and came hastening to the scene, not a thought, scarcely a look was given to the helpless figures of the heavily sleeping guard.

"Fairnest baroness, behold your honoured and distinguished ancestors!" spoke the prince, with mocking courtesy. "I take great pleasure in introducing this last of the illustrious line to the home of which, from time immemorial, the Schwarzenburgs have been so proud and boastful."

The last words had reached Valentin Baer, for, hearing the stir within the hall, he had ventured forth, fastening his dressing-gown as he came, to give the appearance of a sudden rousing from sleep.

Viola likewise glided among them. She had seen the flutter of ladies' dresses, and caught the words: "Baroness of Schwarzenburg," and intense curiosity and feverish interest had overcome both fear and prudence.

Following softly behind her father, she hovered in the background, looking over wistfully to the two central figures who were the focus of all the eyes there.

"Bring more lights!" commanded the prince. "Let us give the fitting illumination to this important occasion—and seats also for the fair and noble ladies. I throw this is an entertainment not often given, famous as the old house may be for its fêtes and revels."

The few servants who could be roused obeyed with the alacrity of fear.

Hernberg and his allies grouped themselves on one side.

Von Schubert, still pale and uneasy, half shielded Lady Viola with his broad shoulders, and the prince, with glittering eyes, flushed face, and evidently extremely agitated, though he tried to assume a cool and nonchalant manner, was striding to and fro in the centre of the ring thus made in front of the two trembling, alarmed maidens, whose pale but beautiful faces shone out with singularly thrilling effect.

"The last of the Schwarzenburgs!" exclaimed Valentin Baer. "Do you mean that this is the Baron Arnold's daughter?"

"Even so, my lord baron. The proofs are indisputable. It is rather inconvenient for you, I confess. Let me see, it takes away your title. You are simply Herr Von Baer!—and a proscribed man at that! Well, I ought to condole with you, but somehow"—and here a triumphant smile broke over his face—"somehow I do not, remembering the prophecy I made for you sixteen years ago."

"Condole!" returned Valentin Baer, fiercely. "No, it would be as much mockery for you to offer as for me to accept it. It is your work, your planning. Why was the daughter of Baron Arnold concealed, her very existence hidden? Well enough I know it was in furtherance of some deeper plot, some atrocious villainy. It is your work, all the misery and wrong and cruel experience that has blighted all our lives—yours alone."

Von Schubert laid a warning hand upon his arm.

Hernberg took a step forward as if ready at the first command to throttle the daring speaker, but the prince only laughed contemptuously.

He actually enjoyed the wrath of his defeated enemy.

"Rail on!" he sneered. "Do you think I shall condescend to be roused to anger at such an insignificant voice? My planning! Well, if it is, you must confess that I have wrought powerfully and well. I told you, when there was time for you to heed it, what would be the result of stepping in my path or

thwarting my wishes. You vowed 'to save the Lady Pauline from my polluting grasp.' You see my memory holds the words yet. Poor idiot! you thought your own mad passion would thus gain some response. Well were you cajoled. When you thought she was already yours behold the favoured lord of Schwarzenburg stepped in and bore away the prize."

The Baron Valentin's face was fairly livid with the rage stirred up by this taunt.

"It was your fiendish wiles that deceived me. You gave me false hopes," he shouted. "You goaded me on to quarrel with a noble and generous kinsman. You deceived us all—one and all. On your head lies the curse for all the guilt and horror that followed."

The prince rubbed his hands together softly, "It was horrible, was it not? The proud blaze of the Schwarzenburg glory was abruptly quenched in blood and shame. Why, once to be a Schwarzenburg was to be next to the royal family itself, so powerful and influential were they at court. And now—"

Diabolical and vindictive was the hoarse laugh he gave as he paused, and looked fiercely into the poor baron's quivering face.

"It is your doing—all your doing! I'll call Heaven to witness it," vociferated the latter again.

The prince had turned to the shuddering Leina.

"Fairnest lady, it is ungallant to dwell upon these unpleasant themes when first you have come home to your ancestral roof. Pardon us. Be assured there is one younger and more ardent waiting impatiently for his bride, who will speedily clear the place of yonder usurpers. He will vindicate your rights here."

"Stephano, oh! where is Stephano?" groaned the Baron Valentin.

Viola stepped forward to his side, and laid her white hand caressingly upon his shoulder, while she whispered:

"Hush, my father—oh, hush! All may not be lost yet. Von Schubert can save us even now."

"But why do I linger with such trifles when the triumph for which I have bided eighteen years waits fruition?" continued the prince. "Now will my promise and my power be thoroughly vindicated. Now comes the strain that will break at last that indomitable spirit. Send in your men from the lower passage, Hernberg, and drive up the hiding inmates of the secret passage-way."

Valentin Baer turned slowly and haughtily, but the cruel man whose will for the time was law made an imperative gesture.

"Nay, wait a little longer, and you will be repaid, I promise you. My prisoner within is no common personage. You will be interested to look upon a face that will seem to rise out of the grave for you."

The baron turned his startled eyes upon him, opened his lips, and then closed them mutely.

"Yes," muttered the prince, pacing to and fro, in the excitement and fever of his anticipated triumph, "at last she will yield. At last the slow-approaching victory is gained and my revenge complete."

His eye was glancing restlessly and expectantly along the panelled walls.

From which side would open the secret door?

Hernberg had given his signal. Every one waited breathlessly.

Even the two wondering maidens, to whom this strange scene was a complete mystery and bewilderment, felt the thrill of premonition.

For all its crowd of witnesses no sound was in the gallery, after the muttered tones of the prince died out, but a profound, expectant stillness.

The muffled shout of the pursuing guard came through the thick walls to them, and then distinctly the sound of flying feet.

Another instant and the panel, with the old knight's picture, swung noiselessly open, and Wirt Womberg stepped forth hastily.

He stopped as if transfixed with horror at the sight before him, and, making a warning gesture, tried to push back some one who followed behind.

But she had already seen the jeering smile, the flaming, exulting face of the prince, and recognized the uselessness of any resistance, while a wild hope that among some of the company she might find compassion, possibly a generous intervention, impelled her onward.

She stepped forward even in that moment with a queenly, majestic bearing, and had never looked more beautiful even in her days of youthful bloom.

The pallor of the smooth, unwrinkled complexion held the clear transparency and polish of ivory; two spots of burning crimson lent back the effect of girlhood's roses.

The eyes blazed and dilated, and deepened till their spell seemed to magnetize every one there.

Around the slender and still wonderfully graceful figure fell and swayed in a soft shimmer of glossy waves the still luxuriant tresses, whose golden brown veiled the silver threads beneath.

The Baron Valentin gave a great cry of mingled joy and horror.

"Alive! The Lady Pauline alive!"

A low murmur ran swiftly along the group, and then died out abruptly as the prince strode to the new comer's side.

"The Lady Pauline herself! My lady, I give you joy of this meeting! My bird was tired of the forest and essayed wings. Has it learned yet that the master's hand is strong elsewhere as well? Is the fair rebel tamed at last—willing to come fluttering, a voluntary guest, and not a captive?"

"My spirit is still the same!" returned she, "and so, alas, I see, is your cruel power. But I shall yet escape. I still defy and scorn you."

"Wait a little, my princess," spoke he, in a tone of the most ironical politeness. "I have some one here to introduce to you—a fair ward of mine, newly arrived from England, for whom an impatient bridegroom clamours loudly. See yonder the fair daughter of Arnold of Schwarzenburg!"

The Lady Pauline followed the gesture of the outstretched hand, and rushed toward the two beautiful maidens, hesitating only a moment between them, though each countenance was alike tender and yearning and intensely interested.

She seized Serena and clasped her to her bosom, covering her face with a hot shower of kisses and a rain of tears.

"My child!—my own, my little Leina!"

Serena's calmness was all broken up. Turning deadly pale, and clasping both hands against her heart, she sobbed:

"No, no; you are mistaken—I am not Leina. Oh, Leina, darling, I never envied you before!" and turned away, burying her face from sight.

Leina, in her ardent, impulsive way, threw herself into the arms that turned to her at this explanation from Serena.

"Is it you, my child? You have more the look of my own family. I thought I recognized my Arnold's grand, calm eyes in her. Have they told you, my darlings, that it's not your mother's fault, but her sorrowful fate, that has left you to grow up without her love and care? Did they not explain to you that I was cheated into believing you dead?—that I was borne away to a cruel prison?—that I am the most persecuted, the most hopeless captive on the face of the wide earth?—and that he, yonder, the deadly, malignant, pitiless foe of your father's house, is to be shunned as the deadliest pestilence? Do you know all this, my precious, my unhappy child?" murmured the Lady Pauline, in swift, excited tones. "Oh, would that you had not come hither to place yourself in his power! What will become of you?—what will become of you?"

"Her fate depends upon her mother's decision," spoke the prince, fiercely. "Hard-hearted, obdurate woman, I did not think there would be a moment's hesitation at this time. Tell me the hiding-place of those papers, and cease to struggle against my will, and all will then be well for you both."

Lady Pauline turned slowly. All the scorn and contempt and loathing that such a vehement nature could contain was poured into her flaming glance.

"Never! never! never!" repeated she. "I defy your power still. Heaven has heard my cry before. It was almost a miracle that answered me then. Can I doubt it will be heard again—the cry of the innocent in the hands of the thrice guilty and accursed? Who are these people about me?" And she turned from one blanching face to another, and clasping her hands, cried, in piteous entreaty: "Oh! have you all hearts of stone? Hear him! You know by his own threats how wicked and barbarous has been his treatment. You know that I am innocent and helpless, defrauded of my rights, outraged in all my tenderest hopes. Surely the king cannot be deaf to such monstrous sins. Go to him—show him what has been done—expose the vile, tyrannical, wicked man before he is seated on your country's throne! Help me!"

The prince's laugh rang out loud and high and fierce.

"You waste your eloquence. Not a soul here but is, like yourself, in my power, or bound to my interests by the closest ties. I tell you it is my hour of complete triumph. Yield to it, you stubborn, rebellious creature. There is no power on earth able to help you. The king lies on his dying bed. See, even Valentin Baer cringes in silence, and Von Schubert does not lift a hand. There is no one to help you on the wide earth."

She turned those shining, dilated eyes from face to face slowly, but hers only brightened into an almost unearthly glory as she cried, in a high, impassioned tone:

"I do not ask help of earth. I pray to Heaven for it. I have a deliverer yet."

While she spoke she stretched forth her hand toward the half-opened door of the secret passage.

The rapid faith, the intense, high-wrought look, despite his efforts at resistance, impressed the man's superstitious nature. He half shrank back while following the direction of that slender finger, and grew pale with sudden terror as a figure slowly emerged to view.

A manly, graceful form, with a pale face and eyes that to the conscience-stricken prince seemed to glow with supernatural light, half blended with the darkness of the windowless corridor, and thus seemed indistinct and shadowy, advanced nearer, and the prince, staring wildly, fell back and stretched out his arms to ward it off.

"The Baron Arnold!" he gurgled, thickly. "The ghost of the Baron Arnold, just as he looked when he fell!"

A purple hue rushed over the pallor of his face; his eyes seemed starting from their sockets. He took another step toward Von Schubert, reeled, and fell prone.

They lifted him up, but though there was the sound of short, stertorous breathing, no sign of consciousness came, and he was silently borne to an adjoining chamber.

"Apoplexy!" exclaimed Von Schubert, while his heart gave one quick bound of glad relief. "His profligate career is indeed fitly ended," he muttered softly in Viola's ear, "and it is a glad day for the land that might have suffered under his iron rule. The heir presumptive is a generous, conscientious, noble gentleman. Take heart. All shall be well at last for Schwarzenburg."

Lady Pauline had flung her arms around her son with a wild sob of unutterable gratitude.

"It was indeed the hand of Heaven. He thought it was my Arnold come out of the grave to rebuke him. Oh, my son, you were your mother's saviour."

"Aubrey—Aubrey Dalberg," whispered Leina, stealing a step toward him, her eyes shining with sudden joy.

Aubrey caught the little hand in his.

"Little Leina! here at Schwarzenburg. Could you not wait for me to bring your tidings?"

"He is your brother, my darling! Oh, Heaven! can it be I clasp to my arms my Arnold's children alive, and safe!" ejaculated Lady Pauline, bursting into a passionate flood of tears as she turned her eyes toward the portrait before her.

"My brother! Aubrey Dalberg my brother!" repeated Leina, looking up pitifully into his face. "I don't believe it."

Aubrey bit his lip fiercely.

"Let us wait. There is so much to tell, so very much to be explained," he said. "Is it safer for us to linger here? He may recover, and we shall be again in his power."

"He will not recover," said Von Schubert, solemnly; "the recklessness of his life gives assurance of it. They have gone for a physician and we shall soon know. Besides, my friends, Hernberg has left strict orders to guard you well. But fear not. If there is sign of recovery I myself will post away to court, and lay all this shameful history before his majesty. It cannot be overlooked. He will not dare pass it by, even if his inclinations prompt it. The record is too black and monstrous."

"And I can add to your testimony papers which prove not only my Arnold's innocence but this man's treasonable machinations," said Lady Pauline. "It is for their recovery that he has persecuted but has not dared to kill me. I hid them; years and years ago I hid them, and still I have them safe."

Then the long and startling explanations were exchanged.

"And where is Stephano?" asked the Baron Valentin, suddenly. "Lady Leina, has not my son come with you?"

"He was thrust ashore and bade to look after himself when we were taken from the schooner," answered Leina.

"He whispered to me that he should find his way here speedily," exclaimed Serena, colouring faintly as she spoke.

Lady Pauline looked at her wistfully.

"My heart is strangely drawn towards your friend, Leina," she said. "Where could she get that expression of eye so wonderfully like my Arnold's?"

"I should be grieved, indeed, if you did not love her," returned Leina, smilingly. "She is my precious Serena—my one darling friend. But for her help how should I have borne the strangeness and discomfort of this forced journey? Oh, Serena, Serena! can you realize that we have really found my castle?"

Lady Pauline turned at a gentle touch upon her arm, and met the deprecating, tremulous glance of Valentin Baer.

"My friend," said he, "can you forgive one who has also suffered bitterly and long?"

She put her hand in his frankly.

"From the depths of my heart. I know now how cruelly you were deceived—what satanic influences

urged you on. I know, moreover, that it was not by your hand that my Arnold perished."

Valentin hung his head, and a flush of bitter shame coloured his very forehead.

"Nay, I will not disguise the truth. I might have saved him. Oh, Heaven, forgive me! I heard his drowning cry and let him perish. I was tempted sorely, and I yielded. Oh, can it be that these long, dragging years of misery and remorse have expiated my sin?"

"Let us pray Heaven that it be so. If you are able, you will help reinstate his children in their rights, and be a kind and judicious friend to them," she returned, with gentle solemnity of voice and look. "Or, if persecutions continue with that pitiless man's revival, you will aid us to escape to safety."

"Heaven knows I would lay down my life to restore you to all the peace and joy I once connived to wrest away from you, Lady Pauline," he returned, humbly. "I will not insult you by alluding to the mad love I bore for you, nor to the bitter jealousy I felt toward my noble kinsman. If, as you say, you know how that arch deceiver cajoled me and fed me with mad hopes, you have an idea of the temptations which may not extenuate but may a little palliate my sin. Gladly will I relinquish all my usurped claims upon Schwarzenburg—joyfully do my best to bring back Arnold's children to their rightful home; and when I see it accomplished it will give me the first peaceful hour I have known since your husband's death."

"I believe you," answered Lady Pauline.

"And now, pray, let us all try to find a little rest. These ladies I am sure will need it, they look so thoroughly exhausted," said Von Schubert. "There is nothing to be done, no movement whatever made, until the physicians have pronounced their opinion. Let Viola show you to her own apartments. The moment the doctors decide a messenger will be posted to court. It will be more pleasant and wiser for you to be out of sight if there be a thorough investigation made."

And his suggestion was obeyed.

(To be continued.)

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE Earl of Strathpey lay upon the stone floor of the dungeon in a feverish slumber. He was aroused by the creaking hinges of his prison door, and the light of a lantern flashing full upon him. He raised himself, with some difficulty, to a sitting posture, and looked in the direction of the door. At first his eyes, unaccustomed to the light, saw nothing but a yellow mist. By degrees the figure of a man became distinguishable, a dark, wicked face bending over him.

"Confound you," uttered a familiar voice, "are you alive yet?"

The earl roused up at sound of that voice, struggled to his feet, reeled and fell heavily against the wall. Lord Angus stood regarding him with sullen triumph. He had come down to the dungeon immediately on his return from London, even before he visited the chamber of his imprisoned bride, to assure himself that his terrible work was complete. He desired to see with his own eyes that the earl was dead, and with his own hands to bolt and bar the vault that contained his body. Then the earl-dom would be his own.

On the morrow, with Maggie as his bride, he intended to leave England for a time, and return to claim his own when matters were somewhat settled. No living soul save Lady Drummond and her two familiars, Mother Gwynneth and Berkit, knew aught of his dark proceedings, and with them his secret was safe. No suspicion, he flattered himself, would ever rise against him; he had taken pains to show himself at Ravenswood and in London, and to join with well-assumed concern in the wonder caused by the earl's mysterious disappearance, and had caused large rewards to be offered for any information respecting him. The prevailing belief was that the earl had gone abroad. He was in such a despondent state of mind that people did not marvel, as they otherwise would have done, at his sudden disappearance.

The only misdemeanour with which the young peer could be charged would be the abduction of Maggie, and that would amount to nothing when she was once his wife.

His efforts had succeeded beyond his hopes, and now, at the dead midnight hour, he stole down to the dungeon to assure himself that his horrible work was done, and to seal with his own hands the tomb that held his victim. And here was the earl alive—white as death, and weak as a babe, but alive. The young murderer glared upon him like an enraged wild beast.

"Confound you," he muttered, "are you alive yet?"

"I am alive," replied the earl; adding, with a sudden overflow of human feeling: "Oh, unnatural son, how could you have the heart to put me to such a death as this?"

"I wanted the earldom," replied the young man, with a diabolical look; "I couldn't afford to lose it. You fancied I wasn't your son, did you? You meant to disinherit me? I told you I'd pay you for that threat! If this death don't suit you, you shall have another form, by way of variety—something sharp and swift."

As he spoke he drew a slender, shining dagger from his bosom. The earl stood calm, lost to all thought of his own fate in his amazed horror at the cool, undisguised villainy of this boy who had been his son—this serpent who turned and stung the hand that had fostered and reared him.

The young man advanced with a creeping, stealthy step, a look of fixed determination in his wicked face, his shining weapon retained aloft. The earl did not move. He was too weak to resist, and he closed his eyes and awaited in silent calmness the blow that would end all his misery. Lord Angus raised his hand one instant, and the unpardonable deed would have been done, but a voice that rang like a trumpet arrested him, a hand that grasped like steel caught his arm, and held it powerless.

He wheeled round, with a dread fear, and faced the young stranger of the Hermit's Cave, who had entered the dungeon by way of the secret staircase.

For one brief moment these two men, so strangely brought together, stood eye to eye, the one calm and intrepid, the other startled and cowering.

The stranger was the first to break the silence. Advancing a step, and tightening his grasp on the young peer's arm, he said, quietly, but with a blazing light in his brave blue eyes:

"Young man, give me that knife!"

"Who are you," thundered Lord Angus, "that dare interfere with my business? Yes, I will give you my knife!" and, foaming with baffled rage, he wrenched his arm free, and made a desperate thrust at the stranger; but, quick as thought, the young man intercepted the blow, and by a dextrous movement struck the deadly weapon from the young lord's hand with a force that sent it flashing and tingling to the other side of the vault.

Lord Angus, finding himself thwarted in the very moment of success, broke into bitter profanity.

"Who are you?" he cried again, scarcely conscious of what he said in his insane wrath. "Why are you here?"

"To save the Earl of Strathspoy's life," replied the stranger, coolly; "I am his son!"

For a full minute after this unlooked-for announcement a dead silence reigned. The earl, white as death, with the blood slowly trickling from his arm, which the point of his son's murderous knife had slightly wounded, stood awed and wonder-stricken, his eyes riveted with a kind of fascination on the handsome face of the young stranger who had saved his life.

Lord Angus, mad with baffled rage, crouched in a corner like a wild beast held at bay; but as the stranger uttered the astounding words, "I am his son," he bounded forward like a tiger, and seized him by the throat.

"It's false!" he shouted; "I am his son, and the earldom is mine!"

The young man shook him off with smiling calmness; then, holding him at arm's length, in his wonderful strength and coolness, he said, serenely: "You are not his son! I have the proof—better still!" he added, losing his hold on his antagonist, and baring his corded arm to the shoulder, his right arm, fair and shapely as a woman's, but with untold strength in its iron nerves and rope-like tendons, "I have the Strathspoy's mark, the scarlet cross. See there!"

Lord Angus did see. On the fair, marble-like skin shone a blood-red cross, so clearly and distinctly marked that it was plainly visible in the flickering lamplight. The earl, bending breathlessly forward, saw too; a low, gasping cry escaped his lips, he threw out his arms, and fell heavily forward before the stranger could reach him.

Lord Angus stood stunned for an instant, and then, with the desperation of a dying hope, he bared his right arm also.

"I have the birth-mark too, for that matter!" he cried, defiantly.

But he made his boast too soon. He extended his arm, but, lo! the scarlet cross was gone! It had wholly faded out, leaving only an imperfect scar to mark where it had been. The sight seemed to madden him. He uttered a cry like the roar of a wounded tiger, and rushed upon his rival, his eyes blazing with a greenish fire.

"Confound you!" he raved. "You shall die! you shall not come between me and my own!"

The stranger met him calmly, with his cool courage and superior strength, parrying his frantic blows with the skill of a trained athlete.

Lord Angus, perceiving his disadvantage, took a

small tin whistle from his vest pocket and blew it shrilly.

The echo had scarcely ceased to reverberate through the vault when a sound of hurrying feet was heard, and in another moment the man known as Berkit came hurrying down, with Mother Gwynneth and her bloodhound close behind him.

Lord Angus made a significant gesture as they entered, and swift as thought the dark man with the sabre-gash across his brow started toward the young stranger.

He had retreated as they entered to the farther side of the vault, and stood now with his shoulders braced against the wall and his resolute blue eyes flashing like stars in the gloom. He saw there was desperate work to do and he harrowed himself for it.

Berkit held a short, two-edged knife in his hand, and with a swift and stealthy movement he made a thrust at the stranger's side, but the young man was too quick for him. He parried the murderous blow with his own knife, which he had drawn, and then, swift as lightning, he dealt the man a blow just below his ear with the horn hilt of the knife, which sent him tumbling in a limp heap across the mouldy floor.

By this time Lord Angus had recovered his dagger, and like a treacherous serpent stole up in the rear to give, as he thought, a death wound to his adversary. But the stranger, whose blue, bright eyes appeared to possess the faculty of seeing in all directions, wheeled upon him, and seizing him shook him till his breath was gone and tossed him against the stone wall as if he were a ball. He fell with a thud upon the flagstones, and at the same instant the old woman uttered a piercing cry.

"You've killed him—my boy, my boy!" she wailed, then swift as thought she called: "Hare, Blood, be at him!"

The hound, which had crouched behind her impatiently awaiting his turn, and filling the dungeon with his hoarse growls, now slid forward on his haunches with the sinuous motion of a serpent, his ears flattened to his head, his eyes glowing like two balls of fire, his red tongue lolling from his red, distended jaws, the terrible fangs gleaming within. He uttered a curious, whining cry, and made a panther-like leap forward, planting his two fore-feet on the young man's shoulders. For an instant the immense weight and strength of the brute threatened to overpower the young stranger, who was already weakened from his incredible exertions. He staggered back, panting for breath, the veins standing out like cords on his white forehead. The bloodhound's murderous teeth were at his throat, his claws were tearing into the quivering flesh of his shoulders.

(To be continued.)

RED HELM.

CHAPTER V.

Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once. *Shakespeare.*

THE two men hauling upon the rope seen had Brava hoisted to the window opening.

The animal sprang into the apartment, and commenced limping about, as if to show his master that he had been hurt.

Bolak advanced and examined the leg which the animal held up, to discover that it was badly bruised—but he did not think it was broken.

"He will soon be well enough," cried the giant; "I am so glad I have found my Brava."

The two men left the cell, the lion following, and going to the top of the ravine they soon hauled up the rope.

Bolak then went to the hut with his favourite, upon whose injured leg he rubbed some salve, obtained from a root that grew on the island, and the virtues of which were well known among the Malays.

The salve operated like magic.

In a few minutes Brava was able to walk with the injured member, although his motions, still feeble, betokened that he still suffered.

Meantime Brenton had concealed himself in the woods.

He had discovered a thick grove near a swamp, and had ensconced himself in a hollow tree. From some bushes he had passed he had plucked a few oranges and bananas, by which means he was enabled to make a good meal.

Afterward he left his retreat and repairing to a stream not far distant he took refreshing draughts. Thus "fortified," as it were, he returned to the hollow, to hear the next moment the sound of footsteps not far distant.

Soon a voice whose silvery tones he could not mistake greeted his ears.

It was Faith who spoke.

"Where are you?" she exclaimed. "Speak. There is no danger at present."

He emerged from the hollow, and in a minute found himself face to face with the fair pilot.

"You look alarmed, and seem almost breathless," said the young man; "what has happened? Surely they have not offered harm to you?"

"Yes, Bolak it was who entered the cave. He is angry because I assisted you, and threatens to put me to death."

"Can we not leave the island?"

"I dare not."

"That seems strange to me."

"I will tell you why," she answered, "so that you may no longer be puzzled on this subject."

She paused to regain her breath, then continued:

"It was years ago—I was then a mere child of ten—when with my adopted father, an old man, I was cast away on this island. We were bound to a British port in India, where my own father, a colonel, had been located for many years. During his absence my mother had died when a Mr. Manton took me in charge. He was a kind old gentleman, a former friend of my father's to whom I soon became much attached. A few weeks before we sailed my own father in India sent home word that he was dangerously ill, and that he wanted much to see me, as he feared he must soon die. This was why Mr. Manton started with me for India. Off this island we were wrecked, when of all the vessel's occupants myself and adopted father were the only persons saved."

"He succeeded in lashing me to a spar, and we were carried toward this island."

"We reached the shore, and Mr. Manton was about proceeding into the interior when we both noticed a little Malay child, who had somehow fallen from a rock into the sea, and was drowning."

"Worn and weary as he was, Manton at once plunged into the waves and succeeded in bringing the little fellow to land, just as his half-distracted mother came running to the beach."

"She was followed by a party of fierce fellows, the pirate natives of the island, who had evidently intended to slay us, having probably seen us drifting toward the shore, but who were evidently now undecided how to act, as they had come in time to witness the saving of the little Malay boy."

"The woman, turning to Mr. Manton, thanked him fervently in broken English; then to her saving followers she spoke earnestly in the native tongue, evidently pleading with them to spare the life of the saviour of the child. The conversation lasted a long time, but it was finally ended by the pirates taking Manton between them and leading him off, while the woman—this was my adopted mother—took charge of me."

"When she reached her hut and she had given me refreshments she told me that the Malays made a practice of never allowing a white person to leave the island after having once come to it, as they did not care to have their place of rendezvous known, fearing that some war vessel might come and break it up. They know how to disguise their true character, however, when necessary. I have seen them pretend great friendship and kindness toward the crews of vessels powerful enough to defeat them, and thus disguise their real character."

"Well, as I said, the woman stated what I have already informed you, then she added that the Malays, on account of the white man's saving her child, would not put him to death, but at the same time they were not willing that either he or I should ever leave the island."

"But in case either of you should succeed in escaping," added she, "the other would be put to death. This is the resolution they have formed, and they will keep it."

"I understand now," said Brenton. "You are bound, as it were, to the island by this circumstance. You dare not leave, knowing that your doing so would result in the death of your old friend—your adopted father."

"Yes, sir, you understand the matter perfectly now."

"Where is that friend of yours? Could you not both escape together?"

"No. They guard him too well. They keep him in a cavern under a mountain, comfortable enough, except as regards this matter of freedom. They let me go to see him occasionally, and he says he would feel happy enough were it not for my being chained, as it were, to this distant island, instead of taking my place among civilized people in a civilized land. Again and again has he begged me to leave the island, and let them kill him, saying that he is an old man and any time ready for death; but, ah! I would sooner die a thousand deaths, were that possible, than have the islanders harm a single hair of my old friend's gray head."

"You are a noble girl," said Brenton, with undisguised admiration. "But it is dreadful your being bound here among a set of cut-throat rascals. Have you no wish, no desire to visit your native land?"

"Yes," she answered. "I often long to see the land so far away—the beautiful land with its white cliffs and dear old homes, where I lived when a

child. The time may come yet," she added, gazing dreamily at the white clouds resting on the western horizon.

"I hope so," said the young man. "Perhaps I may yet be able to take you there."

"You?"

"Yes; they would not harm your old friend, probably, were they to know that I had taken you off."

"Perhaps not," she replied. "Yet I am afraid they might. But come, it will not do for us to remain here. They will soon be after us."

So saying she led the young man deep into the forest.

As they moved on they suddenly heard a rustling in the shrubbery.

Faith held up her finger and motioned to her companion to halt.

He obeyed, when the young girl with stealthy but rapid footsteps hurried in the direction of the noise heard.

Brenton, watching her matchless form as she moved on, soon lost sight of her in the dense shrubbery.

Expecting to see her soon reappear, he kept his gaze fixed on the spot where she had vanished. But minute after minute passed and still he saw no sign of her.

"Strange," he thought. "What can have become of her?"

He waited half an hour without seeing her. Then his heart misgave him. Something unexpected must have happened, or she would have come long before now.

Meanwhile the rustling noise previously heard had ceased.

Brenton could no longer remain inactive. He resolved to search for the missing girl.

Accordingly he cautiously advanced, peering on all sides as he did so.

He had in this way proceeded about a quarter of a mile when he came to a small clearing where the trampled grass looked as if a struggle had here taken place.

On the ground he discovered a small pink ribbon, which he had previously noticed in Faith's beautiful brown hair.

"She has been seen and carried off," muttered the young man.

CHAPTER VI.

Dispute desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved.

Shakespeare.

FAITH, on leaving her companion, had, as stated, proceeded in the direction of the noise heard in the shrubbery.

She had not walked far when the rustling suddenly ceased.

This seemed to imply knowledge of her presence, and she was about turning back when from behind trees half a dozen Malays sprang upon her. One of them stopped her mouth with his hand to prevent her crying out, the rest, seizing her in their powerful grasp, rapidly bore her away.

They hastened in the direction of the seashore, which they soon reached.

Here, near the beach, was a long canoe, capable of holding at least a dozen men.

Into this vessel they thrust the young woman, and quickly followed.

"What does this mean?" inquired Faith, as the wild robbers, seizing oars, pulled rapidly away from land.

"It means we save you from being buried alive. Giant Bolak he want to bury you. We no want it. Better you be Bondo's wife!"

"Now Heaven help me!" exclaimed the young girl, "if I am to be put in that man's power. If anything he is even worse than Bolak!"

"He been want you for a long time," said the Malay, who had before spoken. "He no want you be Bolak's wife."

Faith shuddered, for of all the Malay pirates Bondo was the most brutish and cruel.

"Where is he?" she inquired. "I thought he had gone away on a long expedition."

"Yes, he go away, but he put back on account of storm, and anchor off island yesterday."

"You had better take me back. I wonder that Bondo should thus dare to thwart the plans of your chief, Bolak. His revenge will be terrible when he hears that Bondo has carried me off."

"Bondo never come here more," was the reply. "He get you, and he go away to some other island, and be head chief of men with him."

Vainly Faith pleaded to be taken back. The Malays, who had hitherto often obeyed her requests, now remained unmoved by her tears and her eloquent voice.

Perceiving how useless were her efforts to prevail on the pirates, Faith relapsed into silence.

With head resting on her hand she pondered deeply, endeavouring to hit on some plan of escape. Suddenly an idea flashed across her mind.

The boat, on its way to Bondo's schooner, must pass a large, detached rock, about a league from the island. In this rock the young girl knew there was a cave, which was also known to the Malays.

But they had not explored the cavern as carefully as Faith in her many cruises about the island had done.

She had thus discovered, near the roof of the cave, reached by clambering up the rugged projections, an opening large enough to admit a human being, and partially concealed by long masses of sea-grass, which in many places adhered to the sides of the wall.

This opening led into a rocky chamber, about six feet high and ten by eighteen in breadth and length. "I will jump from the canoe when near the rock," thought the girl, "and swim under water to the other side. The Malay crew will believe that I have drowned myself when they see I do not come up, and that I am not to be found in the lower cave."

Eagerly she watched her chance.

The Malays headed the canoe so that it would pass within a few feet of the rock, and thus catch the current drifting out towards the sea.

In a short time they were in the current, the canoe gliding swiftly past the rock.

Then, suddenly rising, Faith, who had become an expert swimmer since her residence on the island, sprang into the sea, head foremost.

The Malays, with wild cries, endeavoured to whirl the canoe round, but their efforts were vain, the current being too strong.

Meanwhile they eagerly watched the surface of the sea, but in vain, for the reappearance of the girl.

"She drown! she drown!" cried one of them. "We lose her, and Bondo kill us when he find out!"

"Not so sure we lose her," said another. "It is trick. She perhaps in cave in rock."

At this the Malays turned the canoe away from the current, and by taking a circuitous course, succeeded in reaching the rock.

Some of them left the light vessel and searched the cave, but without success.

They saw no sign of Faith.

Then they were all silent, exchanging awo-stricken glances. Not one doubted now that the girl, rather than fall into the hands of Bondo, had drowned herself.

For an hour they remained on the rock, hoping to see the form of Faith when it should rise to the surface.

But they watched in vain.

Disconsolately entering the canoe, they pulled toward Bondo's vessel to carry him the sad tidings, trembling at the punishment which they feared would await them.

Meanwhile Faith had swum under water in a direction which she knew would carry her to the other side of the rock and beyond the force of the current.

Having gained this point, she rose, and, clutching a protruding spar, drew herself out.

She entered the lower cave, and thence clambered into the upper one, where she sank down breathless from her exertions.

Until almost nightfall she remained here, not daring to venture forth, fearing that the Malays might be still hovering about the spot.

The young girl meanwhile felt deeply anxious on Brenton's account.

She feared that on missing her so long he would search for her and thus fall into the clutches of the islanders.

CHAPTER VII.

Unbounded courage and compassion joined,
Tempering each other in the victor's mind,
Alternately proclaim him good and great,
And make the hero and the man complete.

Addison.

BRENTON, on having, as said, concluded that Faith had been seized, determined to seek for her, and, if her life were threatened, to endeavour to save her at the sacrifice of his own.

The trampled-down bushes enabled him to trace her to the sea-side; then, glancing far away, he beheld the canoe in which she was being carried away.

"I cannot reach her there!" he muttered. "Where do those miscreants intend to take her, I wonder?"

He watched the canoe steadily, and saw a figure suddenly leap out into the sea.

At that distance he could not make out whether it was man or woman, but his heart misgave him.

He feared it was the young girl, who had preferred the death by drowning to the more horrible one of being buried alive, which the islanders, according to their custom, probably had intended to inflict on her.

The conviction that the girl had destroyed herself fell with crushing weight on the heart of Brenton.

While peculiarly susceptible, like most men of his

age, to the charms of beautiful women yet he had never before seen one who had made so powerful an impression upon him as Faith.

Thus meeting on that far-off island this lovely creature, who to him had seemed almost like some fabled nymph of the sea, and then to lose her, was indeed a heavy blow to the young sailor.

Caring little what became of him now, he sat down disconsolately by the beach, and gave way to the mournful feelings which had taken possession of him.

Thus hours passed.

The sun was low in the West, the red light streaming like a crimson pathway far along the sea, when the young man, glancing behind him, beheld approaching, running down a hill visible in the distance, rising above the tree tops, a party of islanders, who, it was evident, had seen him from their elevated position.

Nearly at the same moment he heard a tremendous roar which seemed to shake every tree in the woods, and he beheld, crashing along through the shrubbery, its eyes glowing like balls of fire, the lion, Brave, scarcely a hundred yards distant.

Brenton, unarmed as he was, could not hope to cope with the savage beast.

There was a slender tree growing from the side of a rock, so near the sea that the shadows of the branches fell upon the water.

The young man resolved to climb this as his only chance of escaping the lion.

The branches and the leaves being very thick, he also hoped that they would screen him from the gaze of the islanders, who now, hidden by intervening shrubbery, would not see him when he should make the ascent.

Being an active climber, he had soon mounted the tree. A few moments later the lion arrived at the seashore, and glanced round him with an expression like that of surprise.

As he had not seen his intended victim climb the tree he was evidently puzzled to account for his disappearance, and more than one angry growl escaped from the savage animal.

Finally the Malays gained the spot.

They glanced round them in all directions, Giant Bolak being at their head, but they did not seem to once imagine that Brenton was hidden in a tree.

After a hurried consultation they separated into two parties, one of which now ran along the beach in one direction, and the other in that which was opposite the lion, keeping ahead of the group to which Bolak belonged.

The moment they were out of sight Brenton descended the tree.

As he did so, however, he heard a shout, and saw a Malay, who had previously escaped his observation from his being screened by a tree. This man, who had remained behind the rest of the party to act as a sort of rear scout, now pointed, as he shouted, toward Brenton, evidently to draw his comrades in that direction.

Soon the young sailor beheld them coming from both sides to hem him in, the lion ahead of one of the parties, uttering growls of pleasure as he ran along a little more slowly than usual on account of his recent injury.

What could Brenton now do?

To run in any direction must certainly result in his capture, so he resolved to take to the sea and swim for the rock near which Faith had sprung overboard.

He was an excellent swimmer—few, in fact, could surpass him in this respect—but the Malays were good swimmers too, and he would probably be overtaken, he thought, before if not when he should have reached the rock.

Nevertheless he was determined to make the attempt.

He might find a canoe moored near the other side of the rock; if not he could at least baffle his pursuers by drowning himself, a fate preferable to falling into the hands of such bloodthirsty monsters as these island pirates.

Accordingly he sprang into the sea, and at once struck out vigorously for the rock.

This, as we have said, was about two miles from that part of the beach, and as the current now was setting towards it Brenton glided easily along, cutting the water with the speed of a dolphin.

Hearing shouts behind him, he turned to perceive that several Malays had sprung into the water and were swimming after him at a rate of speed which was truly marvellous.

Nothing daunted however he kept on, and soon found himself not many fathoms from the rock. This he finally gained, and as he stood for a moment panting with his exertions he watched the Malays, the foremost one of whom was not farther than a hundred yards from the spot he occupied.

He ran round to the other side of the rock, but he saw no canoe.



[FAITH'S ESCAPE.]

The cavern caught his glance; he sprang into it, crouching behind an angle.

Then the thought occurring to him that the islanders were probably well acquainted with the cave he said, aloud:

"It is no use! I have no arms and would certainly fall into the hands of those fellows were they to gain the rock while I am here. My only chance seems to be to drown myself. I should then at least baffle them!"

The words had scarcely escaped him when above his head he heard a voice the tones of which were by this time quite familiar to him.

"This way, sir! This way!"

He glanced up, but the darkness there prevented his seeing the speaker.

"Where are you?" he inquired.

"Here! here! Climb the side of the cave, and you will see me!"

The young man at once proceeded to obey. The rough protuberances affording him good hold, he was soon near enough to the opening above to behold the gleam of the starry eyes and the outline of the face of the girl pilot.

"Crawl right in. You are pursued, are you not?"

"Yes," he answered, "the Malays have nearly if not quite gained the rock by this time."

So saying he crawled through the opening, which Faith then concealed by means of the thick masses of seaweed growing above the upper edges.

"Thank Heaven you are safe now," said Faith. "The islanders know nothing of this upper cave."

"I am surprised to find you alive," said Brenton, "as I was quite sure I saw you jump from the canoe, in which those savages were carrying you off, into the sea."

Faith soon explained.

"Hark!" she added as a shout was heard without; "the Malays have gained the rock, and are astonished that they see nothing of you."

The murmur of voices now was heard below in the cave.

It became louder every moment, and was soon succeeded by yells of impatience, as no clue to the missing fugitive could be discovered.

For a full half-hour the voices were heard on the rock; then a rippling sound followed as of a canoe saving the place.

"They are gone," whispered Brenton; "we may now venture to leave our retreat."

Faith, however, laid a hand on his arm.

"Not yet," said she; "I do not believe they are gone yet. They probably suspect that you are some-

where concealed about the rock, and are merely pretending they are gone, that you may thus be led to come forth so that they may capture you."

As hour after hour passed, and no noise to betoken the presence of the Malays was heard, Brenton concluded to leave his hiding-place to descend to the rock below.

"Hold!" said Faith, gently detaining him by his arm, "if one of us must go, let it be me."

"No, indeed," answered Brenton; "do you suppose I would permit a woman to run a risk when I am by to do so myself?"

"But they would, perhaps, deal less severely with me than with you," she replied. "Come, sir, I insist on going."

Brenton, however, would not agree to this. Gently disengaging himself from her grasp, he nimbly descended the side of the rock.

Cautiously feeling his way, he emerged from the cave and stood on the rock outside.

The moon was shining brightly, and where the light sparkled on the water in miniature points the young man detected an object gently swaying with the motions of the waves.

He advanced, and examining it closely discovered that it was a canoe.

He was about turning to go and inform Faith when he felt a pair of strong hands grasp him by the throat, while a knee was pressed against his back.

The assault was so sudden that Brenton was taken by surprise.

Nevertheless he did not lose his presence of mind, but with a quick, sidelong movement he succeeded in disengaging himself from the grasp of his adversary.

Turning quickly, he was confronted by a dagger descending towards his heart.

The man who held it was a muscular, wiry fellow, whose sinewy arm betokened great strength, and that a blow dealt by him must prove powerful and fatal.

A man endowed with a less degree of activity than Brenton possessed must have fallen beneath that terrible blow. But the young sailor, lithely twisting himself to one side, received the knife against the skin of his side, across which was thus inflicted a slight gash.

To close with his opponent was now with Brenton the work of a moment.

He knocked the dagger from his opponent's grasp, then, clutching him by the throat, he succeeded by main strength in hurling him down, when the Malay fell headlong into the sea.

Little relishing the prowess of his opponent, who

had in fact now possessed himself of the dagger, the Malay swam away from the rock toward the beach.

Having carefully searched the rock, to make sure that no other Malay was secreted there, Brenton returned to the cave and informed Faith that she might now come forth with perfect safety.

He assisted her down the rugged wall, and she was soon at his side.

He then showed her the canoe, informing her of his struggle with the Malay.

Faith shuddered.

"Had he succeeded in stabbing you the blow must have proved fatal."

"There is no evil without its good," said Brenton; "that man being here has put a good weapon in my hands."

And he examined the dagger with much satisfaction.

"We had better put off in the canoe," added Brenton.

Faith did not at first answer. At last, heaving a deep sigh, she said:

"Be it so. They will think I am drowned, ashore there, so there will be no reason for them to harm Mr. Manton, my old friend."

"You are right. We have no time to lose, as that fellow," pointing towards the man's head, indistinctly visible in the moonlight, "has already nearly gained the shore. He will lose no time in informing his comrades."

"True," replied Faith; "be it so, then. I am ready to go with you."

As she spoke her upturned face, catching the gleam of the moonlight, expressed such purity and confidence as touched Brenton to the very heart.

They entered the canoe, and were soon paddling out towards the open sea.

"Yonder," said Faith, pointing toward the outline of masts and yards, far in the distance, "is the vessel of Bondo, one of the fiercest pirate cruisers, worse even than Bolak—belonging to this island. We must give his craft a wide berth, for, were he to see us, he would send a boat after us, when, with such oarsmen as his to pull, we would soon be captured."

"Be it so," answered Brenton. "We will go more toward the west."

The head of the canoe was therefore turned in the direction spoken of.

Gliding along over the smooth surface of the sea, with the young woman by his side, the sailor, although the perils of starvation, etc., were before them, experienced a sense of deep pleasure.

(To be continued.)



[THE KNOCK AT THE DOOR.]

MAURICE DURANT.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Too fierce a joy doth strike as hard as grief.

TOWARDS the end of November, and one night when the rain beat hard across the moor and the wind howled dimly through the bare, shivering trees, the master of the Rectory sat in his antique, darksome chamber, gazing at the red, expiring fire.

Seated on one of the old high-backed carved-oak chairs, black with age, yet strong as wrought iron, his grand head threw a grotesque shadow upon the dark wainscot, flitting to and fro in the fitful glare of the wax candles like some spectral copy of one of Angelo's noble figures.

On the table, within reach of his hand, which wearily upheld his head, stood a flagon of wine, though the slender Venetian glass showed that as yet it had been untouched.

At his feet the huge mastiff lay stretched at full length, like a lioness at rest.

By the side of the chair leant his faithful gun, and on a chair beside the table his cap and a dead hare.

From the heavy lines upon his forehead one might guess that sad thoughts occupied his mind; for some time his eyes were fixed upon the waning fire, his lips compressed and silent, then a gust of wind, wild and more savage than its fellows, burst against the diamond-paned window. He turned his head with a weary sigh, and, stooping, flung a heavy log of wood amongst the red embers.

"A wild night," he muttered to himself. "Just such another night as the one when I returned to this desolate home of mine. Just such another when I blighted my life by carrying her off. How the time flies. Eight years! They seem only eight months sometimes, eight centuries at others. I wonder where she is now—in some Roumanian city, perhaps, the toast of some crowned idiot snared by her deceitful eyes and evil voice.

"Felise! The name has a bad ring in it; it savours of the tiger. Felise, Fanstine! Both names of shame—both hers. Bah! What brings me in this mood to-night? Is't the wind or the want of wine?" and he stretched out his hand to reach the flagon.

"Wine! How marvellous that I should not have gone the way of many others, and drowned my shame and my broken heart in the fumes of the grape-juice. There was a time when even that seemed a bright hope, a haven of forgetfulness, in the midst of my agony. But no; Maurice Durant was a Durant still, and deemed it better to grin and bear than drink and die. Besides, had I not one

great consolation, a mother whose bosom received my aching head, whose joys consoled my breaking heart? Art! thou only mother I have ever known, I drink with the deepest reverence to thee."

And, touching the glass with his lips, he rose, and, pressing a hidden spring behind a picture which frowned on the side of the room, a secret panel slid back, and he passed through the aperture disclosed.

Holding up the candle, he looked round upon a room barely lighted by its rays, strewn from end to end with pictures, finished and unfinished, great and small, landscapes and seascapes, historical studies and portraits.

Standing motionless for a moment, he walked to the easel, and, turning a picture, gazed with a flashing eye and fast-heaving chest upon the face of a young girl, bright with the liveliness of youth and purity, tender with the softness of love and innocent passion.

"It speaks!" he breathed, almost painfully. "It is the child herself. The eyes are hers as they sought mine, the lips are her very own as they prayed me to do her no harm. Oh, Heaven! thou dost punish me heavily with this love of mine—heavily, heavily!"

Then his head sank upon his breast, and muttering "Maud, Maud!" he strode slowly back into the other room, carefully closing the panel behind him.

As he sank into the chair again, into the same attitude of mournful reverie, the dog rose and pricking up its ears growled threateningly.

Maurice Durant, who knew that the noble creature never gave signs in vain, bent down and stroked it; and the dog, after listening for a moment, dropped into its old position with its head laid low upon the ground and its large eyes fixed upon the door.

Maurice Durant listened attentively for a moment, but hearing nothing save the wind, leant his head upon his hands and fell into an uneasy slumber.

Meanwhile a heavily cloaked horseman was urging his steed at a dashing pace across the moor, and at the moment the dog uttered its warning had pulled up before the little path leading to the Rectory door.

"Phew!" he muttered, leaping down and unfastening the gate. "The place looks like a dead-house, a home for spirits, a prison,—our Lady knows what not that's miserable and ghostlike. I'm half inclined to throw the business up, or postpone to a more propitious season. Sh-sh! It's the drenching rain, the biting wind, the bitter blast which daunts thee, Spazzola. Get thee on and through it, for if thou faltest to-night thy fortune's lost, and if thou bittest well then—ah, what's that? Purgatory! my flesh is on

the creep and my soul's like water! That light must be in a window. Ah, ah! my Lucian, thou art fairly in the hunter's toils at last. Thou eel, thou jelly-fish, thou slip-tween-fingers, thou—What an idiot art thou, Spazzola, to waste thy time in rant when thou shouldst act. Now I'll tie thee here, my weary, bespattered one, and on to my mission."

So saying, he led the horse under as much shelter as the trees afforded, and, fastening its bridle to a branch, hurried up to the house on foot.

Maurice Durant was startled from his brief sleep by a loud ringing of the long-silent house-bell. Hastening to his feet, half assured that it was the trick of a dream, he seized his gun and called the dog.

It wanted no call. With head thrown back and its eyes flashing, it waited for the opening of the door to dash at the intruder whomsoever it might be.

In another moment the great bell rang out again, accompanied by a loud knocking on the worn-eaten panels of the great hall door.

Clutching his gun, his eyes flashing like the dog's, Maurice Durant, whispering a word to Tigris which kept it silent and at his heels, noiselessly unlocked the door and stepped out upon the corridor.

As he did so the old mute met him, and eagerly asked in signs if she should open the door.

He answered her also by signs in the affirmative, touched his gun significantly to intimate that he was at hand to protect her against all ill.

Then he strode to the huge balustrade, and, pointing his gun at the door with his finger on the trigger, and the dog couched in the attitude to spring down the stairs, he waited.

Slowly the old woman crawled along the tessellated hall, throwing fantastic shadows on its pictured sides, and after some time spent in unfastening the rusty locks and bolts cautiously opened the door.

A gust of wind blew her candle out, carefully as her quivering hand had sought to shield it, and a man's voice, sounding muffled and indistinct, exclaimed:

"Give this to your master, the Senor Lucian, and tell him I return good for evil."

Maurice Durant, at the sound of the voice, uttered a faint cry, and clutched the balustrade. Then, recovering, gave the word to the dog, who, opening its huge mouth with a ferocious yell, sprang down the stairs and at the door.

But the old woman had closed it with terrified swiftness, and before Maurice Durant could open it again the sound of a flying horse's hoofs told him that pursuit would be useless.

Relighting the candle, the old woman, as white with terror as her yellow skin would allow her to

be, held out a stained and crumpled letter to her master.

"Is this all?" he signed.

She answered "Yes," with her long, bony hands, and Maurice Durant taking it called the dog and strode up the stairs again.

Re-entering his chamber, he caught at the flagon and drank a draught of wine, then, thrusting out his strong, sinewy hand before him, he regarded it with a stern frown until its tremor had ceased and it was firm again, then tore open the damp, weather-stained envelope.

Once more he paused in an effort to regain his old stern serenity, and stood gazing with tightly clenched lips and lowered brows upon the envelope; slowly, calmly, he extracted a slip of paper, unfolded it, and read it, then, with a cry that a soul emancipated from Hades might utter, fell fainting across the table, in the very spot, on the very same night of the year, where Gerald, his father, had fallen, clutching in his hand, as did he, a piece of paper.

The news of his son's marriage and dishonour had stunned the father; the tidings of the woman's death had felled the son.

Let us bend over the unconscious form and learn for ourselves what it was that had felled him as if with a blow.

It was a small piece of foreign paper, bearing the official heading of a small Italian province.

Within its ruled lines ran, in a priest's crabbed handwriting, these words, in Italian:

"Felice Faustino—surname unknown—aged about 28 or 29, died the twentieth day of —, 18—." Was buried in the cemetery of this village by me, Baptiste Veroc.

(Signed)

"BAPTISTE VEROC, Vicar of San Prestari."

"CLAUDE LORRAINE, Sexton of San Prestari."

CHAPTER XXX.

Our love has brought us might but sorrow,
Now Heaven forbid it brings no sin.

CLARENCE HOUSE—Lord Crownbrilliant's villa in Park Lane—was one blaze of light, for it was the night of the Crownbrilliant ball which had been the talk of London for the last three weeks.

Lady Crownbrilliant had become the fashion. Clarence House the rage, and her soirées the most sought after and desired.

By what means she had reached to the proud position of leader of ton it would be difficult to say. The men declared it was because she was the most beautiful and regal of women. The women whispered that the Crownbrilliant's wealth explained it. Let the reason be what it might there was no disputing the fact—though many envious ladies were dying to do so—that Lady Crownbrilliant's assemblies, dinners and balls were the best and most brilliantly attended of any held within the charmed circle of the upper ten.

To-night was the grand ball of the season. The list of expected guests comprised the *crème de la crème* of the nobility and included—so it was whispered—royal blood.

The magnificent drawing-rooms and ball-rooms, fitted up with princely gorgeousness, had been decorated with flowers and perfumed by a novel process. The band was to perform within a little grotto of ferns and fountains. The conservatories were thrown open and illuminated, the choice singing birds fluttering now and then into the brilliant world of gas and music, but speedily flying back to their cool retreats dazzled by the light and heat.

Every luxury that could be devised had been procured, and no expense had been spared to make the Clarence House ball the great event of the season.

An hour before the time appointed for the opening the countess, already decked out in her ball costume, sat silent and alone in the little pink Paradise called my lady's drawing-room.

With the soft light of the Etruscan lamp playing upon her perfect features and glistening on her magnificent dress she looked superlatively lovely yet very sad.

The white, bejewelled hand that supported her queenly brow trembled visibly and a tear dropped from beneath the fringe of her silken eyelashes.

With a suddenness that made her start—for the Countess Crownbrilliant was less firm of nerve and more given to starting and trembling than Carlotta Lawley—a knock came softly on the panel of the rosewood door, and, in answer to her ladyship's "Come in," her own maid entered and announced that Mr. Chichester waited admission.

Her ladyship having given permission, the next minute Chadleigh Chichester entered the room.

If she was changed so was he.

He looked old, somewhat more worn, and a great deal more eager, excitable and anxious.

"Carlotta!" he cried, in a low, glad voice, almost springing to her side, and pressing her soft white hands to his lips. "I knew you would see me! How

beautiful you look—oh, Heaven, how beautiful!" and he drew back a step to gaze at her now flushed face and downcast eyes.

"Have you come from the House?" she said, looking up at him with eyes in which love shone with a dim, wistful pain that proclaimed at once its guilt and unguiltiness.

"Yes," he said, sinking down by her side and still holding her hands, "but I am going back directly. You said I might come for a few minutes before the ball, and I could not stay away. I am going back directly."

There was something piteous in the wistful helplessness of his low, thrilling tones and the countess's eyes filled with tears.

"You will be at the ball to-night?" she asked, eagerly.

"I speak to-night," he said, wearily. "I don't think—"

"You must," she said, tremulously. "Oh, come, if only for a few minutes."

"I will," he said, simply. "You will save me a dance?"

She nodded.

"Two if you like."

"Two then!" he said, eagerly.

Then there followed a short silence, both sitting gazing at the opposite wall and listening to each other's breathing with that restful, glorious stillness and repose which alone kept their love from driving them mad.

Then he rose.

"Time is up, Carlotta," he whispered, bending over her until his breath dimmed the flare on her brow. "I must go. I seem to have been here only a second"—and he sighed—"good bye—"

"Till what time?" she asked, earnestly.

"Till two o'clock."

"Good-bye!" and she walked with him to the door.

"Lady Mildred and Maud are coming about twelve," he said as he opened it. "I begged them to come earlier, but Maudie had a headache and intended lying down. Good-bye till two—keep me two dances, remember, my—"

At that moment a footstep which Carlotta knew only too well sounded along the corridor, and, starting with a sudden pallor, she grasped Chadleigh's arm to draw him into the room again.

But he—his face darkening—whispered:

"No, no; let me go out," and stepped out into the corridor.

"Hello, Oh-Oh-Chichester," hiccupped as well as stammered his lordship—he had been dining and drinking heavily. "What the deuce do you mean by d-d-deserting the Hou-ouse, eh? Ha! ha!"

Chadleigh tried to smile, but his face only grew heavier.

"I came out for a breath of air and looked in as I passed," he said.

"Th-hat's wight," hiccupped my lord. "Seen Carlotta? She's t-t-togging herself up for this confounded ball. Beasty wot I c-c-call it. I hate b-balls. I say, old f-fellow, I've had a terrible let down over that horrible handicap. L-last a half."

"I'm sorry to hear it," said Chadleigh, burning at his coarse allusion to the woman whom he loved and revered, but whom this man—her husband—had grown to regard in the light of a superb piece of furniture or a thoroughbred horse.

"S-so was I," laughed his lordship. "I'm hanged if I've pulled a s-single event off lately. W-what a l-l-look—w-what a l-l-look! W-where's Carlotta?"

"I do not know," answered Chadleigh, with some truth, for he could not tell whether she had stayed in the drawing-room or gone into the adjoining chamber.

"D-don't know!" retorted his lordship, whose tipsy mood was ready on the slightest provocation to change from the good to the bad tempered. "H-haven't you just l-left her? hie!"

"Yes," said Chadleigh, walking away and trying to keep the contempt raging in his heart from becoming manifest in his tones. "I left her in the drawing-room."

"Ah!" said his lordship, "th-there you are, you see. Why couldn't you say so?" and he stared with drunken gravity after the retreating figure of his unhappy, unsuccessful rival, adding, with a ponderous shake of the head, "Y-you're a good d-deal too much with her l-ladyship, Mr. Ch-Chichester. I'll—Where's the countess?" he broke off to ask of the lady's maid, who at that moment came out of one of the rooms.

"In her room, dressing, my lord," replied the woman, with prompt gibes, and his lordship, not daring to penetrate the *sanctum sanctorum* of her whom he had ceased to love but not to fear, stambled downstairs again.

The countess, who had stood trembling behind the

door of the drawing-room, where she could hear every word, threw herself on the couch in an agony of despair and remorse as her husband's shuffling, uncertain footsteps followed the steady, stern ones of the man it was her agony to love.

One o'clock and the ball is in full swing, the room one flash of brilliant light and colour, the air laden with perfume, and thick with the delicious strains of a fashionable band.

The "Lancers" have just been gone through. Couples are gliding off to the cool conservatories and in search of ices and frozen wines.

Mamas with marriageable daughters are on the tip-toe of anxiety respecting their charges.

Politicians are discussing in little knots in corners and alcoves.

A group of assiduous courtiers crowd round the royal personage who lights up the illustrious assemblage with the sunlight of his presence, and the countess is gliding to and fro with her lovely face all in a sweet and pleasant smile, forgetting no one, neglecting nothing of the duty that falls upon the shoulders of the hostess.

"The countess is looking grand to-night," remarked Lord Hawthorn to his friend the Marquis of Hawtry, with whom he was drinking some champagne in a cool recess.

"Magnificent!" assented the marquis. "Can't make that woman out though. I believe," and his voice here sank to a whisper, "that there's something wrong—or will be if Crownbrilliant doesn't look sharp."

"Oh? what, with young Chich—"

"Hush! no names!" interrupted the marquis, cautiously, looking round as he spoke. "You never can tell who's on the other side of a shrubbery."

"But you don't mean—" asked Lord Hawthorn, aghast.

"In other words yes—afraid so. Crownbrilliant regularly cut him out—overbid him, you know. It's always the way—always. Look at the Countess Fitznart, Lady Markington, and—oh, a host of others. It's a dreadful thing, but, mind, I feel for her more than I do for Crownbrilliant. He's gone all wrong lately. Getting surly, and drinks—whew!—like a fish. He was always fond of the bottle, you know, but kept it quiet until after his marriage. Now he's let the painter go, and is as far adrift as a man can be without going down, all hands aboard. Hush! There they go. That's him whose arm she's leaning on. Handsome fellow, and making his way in the House. It's a devoted bad job!"

Chadleigh had arrived, and the marquis was quite right when he said he saw the countess leaning on his arm.

"You are tired," he said as they strolled through the cool, refreshing world of flowers and ferns. "Rest here a little while."

She sank into the little nook he pointed out to her, and leant against the rock beside her, his dark, earnest eyes fastened upon her sad, lovely face.

"Shall I get you anything?" he whispered.

She shook her head.

"No, I want nothing but a little rest. Oh, Chadleigh, Chadleigh, if you knew how weary I am, how weary! Would to Heaven I were dead!"

He was on his knee beside her, his face white, his lips working.

"Hush, hush, my darling. You will kill me! Dead! Think what should I do if you were—Ah!" and he shuddered. "I cannot speak the word. Oh, Carlotta, Carlotta, my darling! I am going mad! I am dying with the daily longing, the daily despair! Oh, my love, my love, what is to be done? What—Carlotta!"—he broke off with a sudden gasp—"Carlotta, there is one thing left. We cannot endure it longer. It kills me to think that you are bound to him! Oh, Heaven! I shall go mad, my darling! Fly from him! Fly—"

She started to her feet with a shudder and a suppressed scream.

"Go, go, go!" she breathed. "Take me to Maud—gentle Maud—or I am lost!"

He rose and she grasped his arm.

He trembled and grew pale.

The mere mention of his sister's name had shown him the deadliness of his temptation and caused a revulsion of feeling.

"Come," he said, and led her through the conservatory into the room again—her face still a little white, though the smile had returned to it.

In a quiet, cool corner they found Maud attended on by a gray-haired colonel, whose voice and hands were soft and tender as a woman's, notwithstanding he had assisted to carry the heaviest and most frightful of the redoubts on the dread Balaklava.

Maud was very little better for her Christmas in town, though it was far on in May.

Sir Fielding had still remained in London, for the doctors had assured him that there was nothing physically wrong with his dearly loved daughter, and

the gentle girl's ailment was mental, though in what shape they did not, perhaps because they would not say.

In compliance with their advice Sir Fielding had plunged into gaiety and fashion, hoping that every ball and every opera would serve to dispel the unwelcome sadness and paleness that had visited his Mand.

She made room for Carlotta beside her with a sweet smile that came at once as balm and additional force to the countess's troubled soul, and Chudleigh, bowing, strode off to get the cool night air upon his brow from one of the terraces.

"Well, dear Carlotta, have you been dancing much?" she asked, taking her hand, but adding before Carlotta could answer: "How hot your hand is! It burns like fire. Are you not well?"

"Yes, yes, my dear!" replied Carlotta. "The room is hot, and I am rather tired. Are you not warm?"

"Yes, but not like this," said Maud, gently lifting the hand and laying it against her cheek. "It is like a coal. Are you ill?"

"No, no," replied Carlotta, wearily. "Not ill, Maudie, only tired—only tired."

"Can we not go on the terrace a little while?" Maud asked of the colonel.

"Will you let me take you?" he said, with delighted gallantry.

Taking the two on his arm, he led them to the terrace.

"It is cool here," said Maud.

"I will get you an ice," said the colonel, hurrying away.

"Now, Carlotta, dear," said Maud, putting her arm round her waist, and drawing the unhappy woman to her soft, gentle bosom. "Tell me really and truthfully, are you not ill?"

Carlotta covered her eyes with her hands for a moment, then, in her turn, drew Maud toward her, and, looking into her pure, gentle eyes, said, almost hoarsely:

"Ill, ill? Are we not both ill, child, with the same disease—love?"

And as Maud shrank from her grasp with a crimson flush she glided into the room again, leaving Maud, panting and breathless, face to face with her own heart upon the terrace.

What did Carlotta mean? Was it possible that she had read her secret, looked into her heart and seen the image of the being enshrined there?

Her secret!—hers no longer, since another shared it. Then she wept, but felt to trembling as she thought of Carlotta herself, and half annoyed, half frightened closed her eyes and shut from her heart the fearful thoughts and dread that had just entered it, murmuring:

"No, no, Chudleigh is too good—too good."

Then, hearing the footsteps of the colonel approaching, she withdrew to another part of the balcony, for her heart was too full to bear any one near her.

Secluding against the marble balustrade, her sweet face upon her hand, she stayed for nearly an hour looking into the world of stars, thinking of that other starlit, moonlight night, when the heavens had seemed glorious to her with a fresh glory born of the sound of one sweet, grave voice and the touch of his strong, yet gentle arms, and listening to the bursts of music that came fitfully through the high window into the night air.

Suddenly while she sat there, motionless and rapt, a nameless yet distinct commotion in the room behind her roused her, and, rising with a sigh, she walked silently toward one of the windows.

When she reached it she could see that a waltz had just been finished, and that the hot and flushed dancers instead of walking to and fro, and struggling out into the terraces or into the conservatory, were standing looking at a group of persons, amongst them Lord and Lady Crownbrilliant and her aunt, collected round a tall figure whose head rose above the surrounding ones.

She recognized the grand face instantly, notwithstanding a certain strange change about it, and her heart gave a sudden leap that made her turn faint and cling to the pillar of the window for support.

In the giddy ringing in her ears she heard some one near her say:

"Look, that is he—that is Lucian, the greatest painter and musician and the most marvellous man of the age, I think. See what a grand head—it's like a Roman emperor's. Mistaken! not I—Maurice Durant, a country clergyman—not a bit of it. I tell you it is Lucian, the painter; I have seen him scores of times in Venice and Rome. Talk about romance—"

Maud heard no more, for she moved to the terrace and turned her face to the stars.

Was she asleep or dreaming?

The buzzing increased—came nearer. She could hear his voice. It was changed, its sternness had gone; there was a light, musical ring, a certain joyous freedom about it that made her weep—she could not tell why.

She would not faint, though at every word of the ringing voice her soul seemed growing larger, and her senses less distinct.

The music bursting out drowned the voice.

A footstep—his—sounded behind her. She turned, caught one glimpse of his grand, splendid face; lit up with a glorious smile, heard her name breathed in a voice of heavenly music, felt his arms cling around her falling form—his kisses on her brow—then swooned of pure delight and excess of joy.

"Am I dreaming?—am I dead?" she breathed, opening her eyes, and turning them to his that looked down into them.

"Not dreaming or dead, my darling, but mine—mine!"

And he drew her closer to him.

She breathed a sigh and sank upon his breast.

He shook with delight, and his voice, quivering like a leaf, whispered in her ear:

"Do not speak, my beloved—rest—rest. I am thine—thou art mine. When thou wakest I will tell thee all. Sleep—sleep."

(To be continued.)

THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

CHAPTER I.

ESTELLE fell asleep that night with this vague terror still troubling her, more like a shadow of a thought than a real feeling. When she awoke it was broad daylight—as bright and clear a day as bride could desire. As she started up in bed the troubled dream in which she had fallen asleep still haunted her.

"Dora," she said to her maid, who had been making a stir in the chamber on purpose to waken her, for there was much to be done before eleven o'clock, "go, immediately, and ask how the earl is this morning—he had a headache last evening."

"Heaven bless you, miss, the earl is as bright as the day itself. He's been up these two hours. He's come across me twice on the stairs and once in the hall, to ask me how you was, miss, and how you slept, and the like. He laughs when I tell him you are still asleep; but he's dreadful impatient, I know; and it's high time you was up and dressing, my dear. Ladies Augusta and Clara have had breakfast in their rooms, and are under their maids' hands this minute. Shall I bring yours up, miss?"

"Yes, Dora; something substantial. I shall faint before noon, with all I've got to endure, if I don't prepare myself."

"Tea or coffee, miss?"

"Coffee—hot and strong. I do not intend to get agitated and spoil the effect of the ceremony by blundering. Quick, Dora. If I feel that I am late that will worry me."

In a few moments the maid returned with a well-filled tray; a sprig of orange-flowers and a moss rosebud lay beside the plate.

"The earl put 'em there, miss. He would see to your breakfast himself. He sends you his compliments, and how long will you be dressing? I told him not to hurry the bride—she couldn't be suitably dressed in a minute. He's looking uncommon well—a bit pale, but, hark! he seems most as young as Lord Harry this morning, that he do, and younger than his brother the captain. The captain is a jolly gentleman, miss; he's always a-chucking me under the chin and a-teasing of me; but I don't fancy him for all. He's not such a good man as the earl, nor such a handsome, perfect gentleman. The way he snubs his wife is a shame, I say, as hasn't any business to."

"That is true, Dora. You must not express your opinion so freely. Walls have ears," said her young mistress, who was eating her breakfast with quite her ordinary appetite. "There!" she added, laughingly, when she had finished her meal. "Send the tray down the back staircase, Dora; I do not wish the earl to observe the strength of my appetite. According to all precedents, I should be unable to swallow a mouthful. I am shamefully unsentimental."

Although there was to be sorrow after their return from church a wedding breakfast no one was so foolish as to go fasting until then.

The fluttering bridesmaids did not leave their rooms, but there was quite a party without them gathered about a light meal served in the morning-room, the grand dining-room being in possession of those who were laying out the wedding banquet.

The earl, his son, his brother the captain—who had arrived about ten days previously—five young gentlemen, several relatives of the Bramblethorpes, with Mrs. Captain Bramblethorpe at the head, sipped their tea and coffee, conscious that they had plenty of time before them.

The captain attempted to make things very jolly; but owing probably to the preponderance of the male element at table, there was something of an air of waiting and of effort over the little party.

The captain had a bottle of champagne by his plate.

He was a man who would have been called very good-looking by many—florid, fair haired, with a rather stout figure and twinkling blue eyes.

The East Indies had burned rather than darkened him, and a vigorous course of good living had preserved his flesh against all wasting effects of a hot climate.

At first glance one would have pronounced him an extremely easy, jolly, pleasant man. And so he was, but it was the ease and good nature of utter selfishness.

So that he secured his own pleasures it did not trouble him what became of the rest of the world.

Behind the smile in his eye lay a light like the glint of a weapon.

He had said a good many disagreeable things to his wife when he learned of the expected marriage, both about his brother and his brother's fiancée, sneering at one as being in his dotage, and the other as being a doused sharp girl who had played her cards to good purpose.

"I never expected to inherit the title," he said, bitterly, "but I knew that he had a chivalric notion of justice, and I did look to being well remembered in his will. Now, I suppose, he'll raise a second crop of heirs, and there will be nothing to spare for me."

"There's but five years' difference in your ages, my dear," timidly observed Mrs. Captain. "And the chances, I am sure, are in favour of the earl's outliving you, with your habits and the hot climate, so what is the use of feeling disappointed? He's been very liberal to me. I do not know how I should have managed, often and often, had it not been for his assistance."

"How does that help my case, little simpleton?" politely observed her lord. "The fact is I'm in debt in my regiment—up to the eyes! I came here to beg or borrow six or eight thousand pounds of the earl."

"Dear, dear," murmured the poor little woman. "That's a large sum, De Vere! I don't believe he will be willing to take so much from his children."

"He's got to do it!" ejaculated the captain, with the addition of an emphatic which set her nerves trembling. "I shall get it out of him in a good-natured moment."

So he sat at breakfast, this eventful morning, doing his best to entertain the company and rallying his brother with jokes that bordered on coarseness, though never quite touching it. He had assumed the responsibility of seeing the affair through, according to the laws and regulations of the code.

Lord Harry, having ascertained that his father felt unusually well, shrank into silence; he was always silent and preoccupied now. Mr. Douglas, who knew the cause of his suffering, and who out of the fulness of his own joy spared the keenest sympathy to his friend, took upon himself to be gay and social in Lord Harry's stead.

Meantime in the chambers of that grand mansion there were a flutter and stir and nestling as of a bower of birds.

The hair-dressers and the lady's-maids were having a busy time of it.

Seven young ladies to be "gotten-up" at one time! Six fair girls dressing to attend upon the bride. It was almost too much even for that great house! It seemed as if order would never come out of that brilliant chaos.

There were little shrieks after lost fans, little cries after mislaid bouquets, last glances into mirrors, last looks after handkerchiefs, a shaking out of trains, a chorus of admiration—cries—a joyous, gentle excitement suitable to the occasion, and of which it was a great pity the masculines waiting below should be deprived.

Three times the gallant captain had bawled out at the foot of the stairs, in the same voice in which he ordered his company:

"Half-past ten. 'Tis time we were on the march!"

In response came a faint chorus of cries—the rustling and the twittering increased a hundredfold.

"Forward, march! I say. 'Tis fifteen minutes to eleven!"

Dora was sent out to announce that the fair body-guard "were coming."

Yet they did not come.

"Eleven o'clock!" shouted the marshal, once more. "It's well they are not men! We shall have no wedding to-day!"

This solemn announcement brought out the tardy body-guard.

The earl was walking up and down the drawing-room, happy, but a little impatient. He had been so absorbed in thought that he had not heard the preli-

minary tumult; but he came to his senses just in time to hear the words:

"We shall have no wedding to-day!"

It seemed to him that a bell tolled. A sharp pain ran through his heart causing him to put his hand to his side.

"There is a bell tolling for a funeral—how sad!" he sighed.

Then he recollected himself—the spasm of pain passed as quickly as it had come.

"The ladies are ready," Lord Harry came to him to say, and he stepped out into the broad hall.

The bride was coming down the stairs on the captain's arm.

She was looking superb, and she knew it. If not so strictly beautiful as some of the young girls about her, she was, in that hour of triumph and excitement, brilliantly handsome. Her dark eyes sparkled under their drooped lashes, her cheeks glowed with lovely colour. The bridal veil softened her dark, smooth complexion. Ornaments of diamonds and pearls—her lover's gift—shone in her black hair, and on her neck and arms, gleaming out from the midst of orange-flowers.

Her magnificent white-satin robe floated far behind her, gracefully and daintily upheld by six lovely girls, the two foremost of whom were the Ladies Augusta and Clara.

All these were dressed in pompadour colours, over-dresses, airy and puffed, of the softest imaginable shade of rose, over pale silver-blue silk, with ornaments of rose-coral and small turquoise-blue flowers.

A lovelier procession never before went down that grand old staircase.

Even the captain stood a moment when they reached the landing, feasting his eyes on the rare sight.

"Confounded pretty. Is there a land on the face of the earth can equal that?" he exclaimed; then remembering his grave duties he marshalled the company to their respective carriages.

The day was intensely warm and bright.

There was a large crowd in the church, and about the pavement hovered an equal number of curious outsiders, waiting to enjoy the sight of wealth, rank and beauty at its prettiest.

Two or three policemen preserved order and a wide path for the bridal party to enter the church.

The captain led the way with the bride into the spacious vestibule, followed by the roseate clouds of maidens who clustered about, bearing up the bride's long train.

At the other door entered the bridegroom with Mrs. Captain De Vere on his arm and his attendants.

His son had ridden in the same carriage with him, and as his father had stepped out had exclaimed to him, in a low voice:

"Father, I never saw you so pale."

"It is nothing," the earl had answered, with a smile; but the tone and smile had both affected Lord Harry strangely.

And now the whole magnificent *cortège* swept up the two aisles and met before the altar.

The moment to which Estelle had looked forward with such throbs of exultation had arrived.

Her own father in his stately robes, assisted by the rector of the church, stood before them ready to unite her to the man who was to give her the title of countess with his hand.

The soft, rustling movement of the eager spectators subsided along with the splendid strains of the Wedding March.

Estelle's bosom heaved with pride, one to the manner born could not have better borne the dignity of her position.

The brilliant, critical crowd, the intense silence, did not embarrass her.

Yet how intense was the silence.

It became more so. She heard the beating of her own heart. Why did not the ceremony begin? She looked up at her father. The book was dropping from his hand—he was staring in terror at the bridegroom.

A sharp cry rang through the church. It was Lord Harry's voice:

"Father!"

A dead weight fell against her which nearly crushed her to the floor.

There arose shriek after shriek from the young girls behind her.

At her feet lay the earl. A momentary spasm had distorted his features, but that was passing away, leaving his wide-open, stony eyes staring up into hers. She cast herself down beside him. She got hold of his hands and her screams rang through the building.

A physician made his way through the throng. He felt the pulse, he pressed his hand over the heart, then he shook his head. Estelle was watching his movements with fiery eyes. When he shook his head she grasped his arm.

He is not—is not——" she gasped.

He would not tell her, but arose and whispered to the captain:

"He is dead!"

Carefully as he had veiled his voice she heard the three fatal words.

"Oh, Heaven!" she shrieked, and then she fainted dead away.

One might have pitied her most tenderly who did not know that the swift, sudden, sharp thought which she did not put in words was this:

"Dead, and we not married. Why could he not have lived ten minutes longer? I have lost the coronet!"

The double shock was indeed too much for her endurance.

CHAPTER XI.

A DEAD man, a fainting woman, these were the two borne back to the flower-decked palace where the wedding banquet was spread, instead of the joyous bridal pair for whom the retinue of servants stood in waiting.

"Disease of the heart," said the half-dozen physicians, who speedily came together about the dead earl as if their skill might yet be of some avail.

Captain De Vere was completely overcome. He wept like a woman, going out frequently to the dining-room to strengthen himself with a glass of champagne. He was so flurried and distracted that his presence was poor solace to the stricken children.

Lord Harry was the only one who preserved any presence of mind. Terrible as the sudden blow was to him, he remembered his poor sisters, and fought against his own great sickness of heart that he might support them.

For some time they refused to quit their father's side, clinging to his cold hands, covering his face with tears and kisses, while their moans and passionate appeals to him touched to pity all who heard them.

Meantime the bride was carried to her own room, where she lay insensible for an alarming length of time.

The family physician came up to prescribe for her, Dora hung over her, crying, as he rubbed her wrists and bathed her forehead.

"Poor child!" muttered the doctor, compassionately.

Even the housekeeper was sorry for her in that hour.

They loosened the white satin dress and removed the bridal veil and wreath.

"Were they married—before it happened?" whispered the housekeeper to the maid, who had been at the church.

"Not one word was spoke—no," sobbed Dora.

"Good!" thought Perkins.

Presently Estelle opened her dark eyes, but lay quite still, as if recalling the scene out of which she had slipped into unconsciousness. Then she cast a wild glance at the anxious group about her bed, and, springing up to a sitting posture, began to scream as she had done in church.

"Hush! hush! my poor dear!" said Mrs. Captain De Vere, fondling her head, but the bride only screamed the more loudly.

Every time she caught sight of her wedding-robe, or of the veil which had been hastily thrown across a chair, her sharp shrieks would ring out anew.

The doctor prepared a powerful anti-spasmodic in a glass.

"Undress her, and get those things out of her sight," he said, "then give her this. I will return in an hour to see her again."

"You shall not take it off! you shall not! We are not married yet. Do not you hear what I say? We must go to the church again. The earl is better now!" so she shrieked, resisting, with all her might, the efforts to disrobe her.

Fortunately, annoyed by their persistence, she burst out into peevish crying; from that she went to sobbing, until finally, quite exhausted, weak as an infant, she let them do with her as they would, drank her medicine, and lay back on her pillow, pale and quiet.

In all this Estelle had not been guilty of any of her usual acting. The excitement and anxiety which had constantly beset her during her brief engagement, the high tension to which her nerves were wrought by the part she had to play in the grand public ceremonial—followed by the swift, awful shock, the crushing disappointment—had seriously affected her.

It was a dreadful day to the whole household—one not soon to be forgotten by even the least interested person.

Lord Harry had been asked to try if he had not some influence over Estelle to quiet her, but he had refused.

His sisters needed him more, he said.

When he thought at all of the bride on that trying day it was with feelings of repulsion that were almost hatred.

He felt as if she had been the instrument of his father's death—an injustice, of course; yet so fully did he know the purely selfish motives which had actuated her, and the purely selfish nature of her grief that he felt as if he could not tolerate the sight of her tears and hysterics.

Others, however, were not so well aware of her real character; the story of her wild and ungovernable sorrow flew over London.

A few unkind or sharp people remarked that she was doubtless afflicted by the loss of a title as the loss of a husband, while others prophesied that she would soon console herself with the new earl.

But, in general, she received more sympathy than she merited.

The dreary days "dragged their slow length along" until that of the funeral.

There was the gloomily magnificent pageant, so different from that of the bridal *cortège* which had set out from the same door so brief a time before.

When Lord Harry returned from the funeral his sisters rushed into his arms as if he were all that was left to them.

Yet Mr. Douglass was there, too, as one who had a right; and Lady Augusta was soled by feeling how much she might trust to his steadfast tenderness.

As yet Estelle had not left her room.

Her father asked her if she would go home with him, but she declared herself not well enough, and it seemed that she was not.

"Go back to that Rectory!" she thought, cheerlessly; "yet I must go soon I suppose. It will be duller than ever. I cannot exist there after this."

She had never been as fond of her father as girls are, and she felt little power to comfort her in this crisis, and was almost glad to leave her with her cousins.

As she tossed on her feverish bed she had little to make pleasant the thoughts which crowded upon her. Already she had passed from the keenness of despair to something of her usual calculating mood.

She had found time to regret that she had played her cards so openly and boldly before Lord Harry as to preclude all hope that she might still win him.

Her only rival, Agnes MacLeod, married and gone to her poverty-stricken home, and nothing now in her way but her own too rash betrayal of herself.

It was bitter to reflect upon, and she had so much time for reflection.

When the head of the house is taken away the melancholy necessities of business must always press upon the family with almost shocking speed; and thus it was that there gathered in the library, after the funeral, steward, attorney, Captain De Vere, Lord Harry, and all interested, to witness the opening of the departed earl's papers.

There was a will, in which the earl had left ten thousand pounds to his brother De Vere, and a liberal settlement upon each of his daughters, who had, besides, some money left them by their mother; the title and the main body of the estates of course descended by entail to Lord Harry, who was now the Earl of Bramblethorpe.

Estelle's name was not mentioned, the will having been drawn up some three years previously.

The affairs of the deceased seemed to be in the best order, so that Lord Harry, who had been troubled with a vague fear that the secret might rise up out of these papers like a ghost from its grave, felt comparatively at ease.

All seemed as clear as the daylight, and as secure as forms could make it.

"The new earl just steps into everything; and you ain't been left a penny, my poor darlin', and you as good as his wife," complained Dora, who had been lurking downstairs after the news, and came up with it as soon as she got it.

"Of course Lord Harry is the earl now," murmured Estelle.

"It was very unreflecting of the old earl not to alter his will after he became engaged to you, I say. You should have your thirds as much as if you were actually married, and if that young man is the man I think he is he'll make it all right, my dear," continued Dora.

"He never will," said her mistress, sighing. "He doesn't like me, Dora—he never did. I daresay he was vexed enough at thought of my being his father's wife."

"I've noticed he's not set foot in this room since you was ill, miss. Common politeness might 'a sent him up, I say."

"Hush, Dora. He had a great deal to think of. He will come soon, I am sure. Did you tell me the captain was down for ten thousand pounds? Hum! I was thinking he would not have anything. Does he talk of going away from here soon? I want to see him before he goes, if he thinks of it."

"He's going to stay the rest of the summer, I heard 'em say, miss."

"All right. Then there's no haste about my seeing him."

Estelle turned her face away from the light, and began to think so hard and fast that a bright spot presently leaped into her pale cheeks; and Dora, who sat near, sewing, said:

"You be looking feverish again, my dear; you must take your fever-medicine, or the doctor 'll scold me."

Estelle put up her hands to her hot face.

"Bring me that hand-glass, Dora; I wish to see if I look any older. I feel as if I were fifty."

The maid brought the glass.

"How bright my eyes are, and how red my cheeks. Is it the fever?"

"Yes, miss, it's the fever. I'd rather see you a little paler."

At this moment there was a rap at the door, followed by the appearance of Lady Augusta asking if her brother might come in.

A still brighter colour rushed into Estelle's cheeks as she murmured her assent.

She would have given all she had to give, at that moment, if she had never held that conversation with Lord Harry in the parlour the night on which she affianced herself to his father.

It seemed as if his eyes must pierce the mocking veil of mourning which was deceiving all others.

He to whom she had avowed her object in this marriage must understand the single source of her regret.

Not that she had not been shocked by that sudden death at the altar—she would have been inhuman not to have been appalled by that, for the time being, but as for any lasting grief Lord Harry must know that her sorrow was only for lost place and lost power—not for lost love and companionship.

But her bright eyes met his with an intense, mournful gaze which disconcerted him.

He had expected some sort of acting which should displease and disgust him—an affection of bereavement at which he should be indignant.

Estelle lay there in her white wrapper perfectly quiet, her black hair streaming over her pillow, her cheeks scarlet, her lips parched, her eyes preternaturally large and bright.

She did not force a tear nor utter a sigh.

She just gazed at him with a still look, which, for once, he could not interpret.

"Poor Estelle, how hot your hands are," said Augusta, sitting on the edge of the bed, and taking up one of the listless hands.

Lady Augusta's own hands were hot, and her eyes heavy, while all the delicate pink colour had forsaken her cheeks, and her slender form drooped as if she could scarcely support herself.

She believed that Estelle suffered almost as much as she did; therefore she felt toward her a fonder impulse of sisterly affection than ever before.

How would she have started and withdrawn into herself could she have seen clearly into her cousin's heart?

"Are they?" said Estelle, languidly; "but how pale you are, darling. You should have the doctor's advice. Will you not see him when he comes in this evening?"

"He cannot 'medicinate a mind diseased,'" was the sad reply.

"To a certain degree he can, Augusta. He has helped me, Lord Harry," she continued, in the same low, listless voice, "I have been thinking it would be better for my cousins to return to Bramblethorpe Villa. Since they cannot go out in society they will be more at peace there, and the air will be so much better for them."

"Oh," cried Lady Augusta, "do let us return there immediately, Harry! I long for my country home. Papa was so fond of the garden—"

Her lips trembled, and she could say no more.

"I have been thinking of it. I am quite willing and ready, if you are."

"Let us go, then, as soon as Estelle is able. The garden will be such a comfort to me. You do not guess how I long to be in it, Harry—to be away from here."

"How soon do you think you will be able to bear the journey?" Lord Harry inquired of Estelle.

"As soon as the doctor allows me. I wish now that papa had stayed and gone at the same time."

She closed her eyes as if tired with what she had already said.

Augusta crossed the room to obtain a fan.

"Lord Harry," whispered Estelle, "was there anything found with the earl's papers to give you any uneasiness?"

"Nothing," he answered, rather sternly.

"I am glad of that. I shall never betray you," she murmured, and closed her eyes again.

"Betray me!" thought the new earl, wrathfully.

It wounded his pride severely to be thus patronized, and yet, from what his father had confessed to him, he could not doubt but that a dangerous secret lay hidden somewhere—perhaps ready to sting him when he least expected the lurking venom.

"She shall tell me what this secret is. I am not one to be kept dodging about in the dark. I will wring it out of her," he thought.

And, looking at the seemingly weary and quiet face, he measured his will with that of Estelle Styles.

"By wile, guile, or force, she shall give it up," he resolved.

The next day Estelle was assisted downstairs to the library, as a preliminary to her attempting the three hours of railway travel on the succeeding day.

She lay on the sofa awhile.

"Take me out of this room! Let me go to the drawing-room!" she exclaimed, piteously.

And they led her where she desired.

She had not thought that memory would be so strong—nor conscience either.

The spirit of the dead earl seemed to haunt the spot, which had been his favourite retreat while alive.

She sat in the chair where he had sat when she beguiled him into the belief that she was tender and fond and true, that she loved him for herself alone.

But now he had the clear gaze of a spirit, and was aware of all her duplicity, and his own wasted kindness.

She lay there, self-condemned, remorseful, until her nerves gave way, and she begged to leave the apartment.

"Has she really more feeling than I gave her credit for?" Lord Harry pondered as he supported her faltering steps into the next room.

She did look white and startled and stricken.

"Sit down by me; I cannot endure to be left alone a moment," she said, a few minutes later, to Captain Bramblethorpe, who had come to her sofa, and made some polite inquiries after her health.

The gallant captain drew a chair beside the sofa. He was usually attentive to all pretty women, except his own wife.

"I am afraid you will hardly be able to attempt the move to-morrow, Miss Estelle."

"Oh, yes, I shall. My will will carry me through, captain. Are you going with us?" she asked.

"I may go to see you safely settled, but I shall not remain long. The country bores me. It has been so long since I have had an opportunity of enjoying London that I don't like to leave it. It suits my taste here. My nephew has kindly given us permission to keep this house open as long as we desire; so we shall stay here."

"But you will come to the villa before you return to the East Indies, captain?" she inquired, a little anxiously.

"Ha! yes! half a dozen times, I dare say. My leave of absence is a long one this time. Earned it, my dear, by fifteen years' faithful service."

"In case you should be unexpectedly recalled or get homesick, captain, promise me that you will let me know in season of your anticipated return. It is just barely possible that I may wish to confide to you a matter of some importance—to yourself."

"Ha, now, really, Miss Estelle?"

"You promise me not to quit England without letting me know?"

"That's easily promised, my dear. Oh, yes, I promise you that. But what matter of importance can you possibly—"

"There, there, captain! You must subdue your curiosity. Perhaps nothing—perhaps something. I have always thought it must be hard to be a younger son," she continued, musingly.

"Deuced hard," was the quick response.

"But the earl left you a handsome sum?"

"Enough to pay my debts and a trifle over. However, it was good of him, considering that he had three children."

"Yes, he was a generous man, and he meant to be a just one."

As she ended this remark Estelle closed her eyes with a long sigh.

"He left you nothing. Of course he could not foresee—"

"began the captain, intending to be sympathetic.

"I am glad he did not. I want nothing. The world is nothing to me now, and in my own quiet home I shall have all I need."

"Confound it! she must have been really fond of my poor brother," reflected the captain, brushing away a tear from his own lids. "I did not give her the credit for it. She's a good girl after all. Sorry for her. I do wonder what matter of importance she can have to confide to me? I shall tease myself more than a little about it. I've a mind to question her farther on the matter. Confound it! it's not

pleasant to leave a man in suspense! Might as well string him up with a rope and tell him you'll cut him down next year. Miss Estelle," he began, persuasively.

But here others came about the invalid's sofa, and she was not left alone a moment.

Presently she went wearily upstairs again, and he was obliged to curb his curiosity as best he might.

(To be continued.)

COURTESYING.

THE ability to courtesy gracefully is an accomplishment to which most ladies aspire, but which comparatively few attain. Nature has denied to many of the sex the power to perform the evolution elegantly, for its proper execution demands elastic thighs and tendons, and complete command over them.

It is easy enough to "crook the hinges of the knees," but the undulatory movement which gives you the idea of an overflowing and retiring wave is possible only to lithe and symmetrical limbs daily schooled in the graces of genuflection.

At "the finishing academies" for young ladies the art of "receiving," and of entering and leaving a room in a manner disturbing to the hearts of men, is supposed to be thoroughly taught; but your boarding-school courtesy is nevertheless invariably formal. The dramatic courtesy, on the other hand, is much too elaborate for private life.

It is in fact a stately imitation of the courtesy, where the knees come so near the floor that the recovery is a tremendous strain upon the extensor muscles, and, unless the latter are vigorous, is apt to flush the faces of "presented" ladies with a crimson hue. We have heard of fair dames and damsels who, in attempting to make the obeisance to royalty very profoundly, have floundered frightfully in their efforts to regain the perpendicular.

Thrift does not always follow fawning; and ladies who "courtesy to the ground" should be very sure of their physical capacity for the upward movement. It is better to abate an inch or two of knee-worship than to run the risk of a collapse. That plebeian variety of the genus called a "bob courtesy" is decidedly the easiest, because in that the strain is equal and simultaneous on both the lower limbs, and lasts only for a moment, while really as a symbol of reverence the "bob" is quite as significant as the forward and backward sweep of a duchess before a queen.

Spanish ladies can say a great deal with the fan; but more may be expressed in the dip and rise of a graceful female figure than can possibly be fluttered from that telegraphic implement of sentiment and passion. Condescension, respect, sarcasm, admiration, indifference, pride, contempt, may each be visibly interpreted in a courtesy.

Courtesying is, in short, a species of calisthenic phonography, a system of personal hieroglyphics, by means of which a lady, well versed in its mysteries, can express her opinion of individuals she meets in society in a very pointed and unmistakable way. We have more than once seen a presuming coxcomb summarily killed off by a chilling courtesy.

THERE is living in Cabo Frio, province of Rio de Janeiro, a poor man named José Martins Coitinho, born in Saquarema in 1894, and being now 173 years of age; his descendants reach the number of 204 persons.

THE largest salmon of the past season was taken in the Severn, and weighed 63 lb. Other fine ones were also taken on the river, comprising a 56 lb. fish, one of 50 lb., one of 41 lb., and several, it is stated, between 30 lb. and 40 lb.

GLOVES.—Judges used to be prohibited from wearing gloves on the bench, and gloves were not tolerated in the presence of royalty. The covered hands were considered discourteous in the latter case, because the first gloves being gauntlets it was equivalent to presenting the mailed and consequently threatening hand to the king.

A TRAFALGAR VETERAN.—The death is announced of Mr. Francis Leonard, one of the few remaining survivors of Trafalgar, in his eighty-sixth year. In 1800 he joined the "Agamemnon," and under Admirals Parker and Nelson served in the battle of Copenhagen in 1801. In the following year he removed to the "Donegal," commanded by Lord Collingwood, employed in the service on the coasts of France and Spain, and in 1804 the "Royal Sovereign," and sailed under Lord Nelson for Egypt, where he took part in the memorable battle of Trafalgar, 1805. At the conclusion of the war he was appointed to instruct in the use of the broadsword the men of the "Renown," "Rodney," "Royal William," and the "Prince," for which he received many certificates from various admirals for his valuable services. In 1815 he joined the "Queen Charlotte," and took part in the battle of Algiers. For many years he was port admiral's coxswain at Portsmouth and Plymouth, and was selected as coxswain to William IV. on his visiting those ports.

as Lord High Admiral. For his services he held many medals and clasps, and enjoyed a pension up to the time of his death.

THE thieves who stole a silver statue of San Mercurio from the church of Serracapriola, in Italy, have been arrested at Sanevero. The name of his saintship is new to us, but since he seems to be the counterpart of Mercury in the "wicked world" of modern Italy, and Mercury was the god of thieving, it is to be hoped the culprits have a legitimate plea in extenuation.

LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE

CHAPTER III.

It was an enchanted voyage to the young Marquis and Marchioness of Chetwynd from St. Kilda to the shores of Scotland. Upon their first night out the wind blew fresh and the rain drizzled drearily, and not a star was visible in the black heavens. Giving the rock of St. Kilda and the tiny outlying islets a wide berth, the yacht struck out upon the broad Atlantic, sounding before the wind like a frightened sea-gull. But with the morning came clear blue skies and sunlight, and the "Sylvia" tacked to the eastward and hurried forward, all sails set, upon her homeward run.

They arrived at Inverness one rainy morning, and the young couple quitted the yacht, proceeding to an hotel. Lord Chetwynd gave directions that the "Sylvia" should proceed at once to Portsmouth, while he continued his journey homeward quite leisurely by rail with his bride.

Their stay at Inverness ended with the morning, which dawned dark and gloomy. The first express train to the southward bore the marquis and marchioness on their way to Edinburgh, where they arrived in the course of a few hours, going directly to the "Royal Hotel."

The pair were installed in their apartments at once.

Bernice tossed aside her antiquated straw bonnet, of a fashion long extinct, and walked to one of the windows, looking out upon Princess Street Gardens with eager curiosity. The Scott monument had not power to hold her attention long from the dwellings, the streets, and the people thronging them.

"How very strange everything is!" she said, with a long breath. "How oddly the houses and roofs look after St. Kilda! And yet everything looks familiar to me, Roy. I have read so much of English and Scottish life that I feel at home here. The people, however, dress very strangely. See how short and scanty the dresses of the women are; and how strangely they dress their hair, and what queer little bonnets they wear. Oh, Roy, I feel so different from them. I shall not dare walk in the streets," and Bernice gave a quick glance down at her full, straight gown. "I wonder you ever wanted me, Roy—I'm such a contrast to the ladies here."

The young lord smiled and drew her slight figure to him, and they looked out of the window together.

"I have secured a jewel of rare value, Bernice," he said, tenderly, "and a suitable setting can easily be procured. You are just as lovely to me in this odd gray gown, but people who mingle with the great world all conform to some particular mode of dress, and you will be happier and more at ease if you also conform to the general custom. To-morrow we will proceed to transform my gray little chrysalis into a gay little butterfly. We shall stay at Edinburgh a week, interspersing the duties of shopping with the delights of sight-seeing, and then we will go down to our home in Sussex. I shall write this very evening to my step-brother and sister, informing them of our marriage, and asking them to prepare a proper reception for us. The Marchioness of Chetwynd must not arrive at her husband's house like any mere guest."

Dinner was served to the pair in their own private sitting-room.

After the table had been cleared the marquis produced writing materials and engaged upon a long and confidential letter to his connexions, detailing the fact and circumstances of his marriage in the rapturous language of a happy bridegroom.

"How surprised they will be to hear that I am married!" said the young lord, pausing in his task to look lovingly into the piquant face at his side. "And how pleased they will be! I am not particularly fond of Gilbert Monk, little Bernice; but he is devoted to me and to my interests, and my mother liked him. But Sylvia is as dear to me as if she were my own sister."

"Is she beautiful?" asked Bernice, in a tone of interest.

"She is considered very handsome," answered the marquis, "but she does not quite answer to my ideal of beauty. She is a loving, clinging, dependent sort of girl, essentially feminine, thoroughly refined, and a perfect lady. I hope you will love her, Bernice. I want her to feel that our home is hers, and that she has a sacred right there, and I know you will share my wish. Since my mother's

death I have given Sylvia—as to a sister—an annual allowance of two hundred pounds, her own private income being only about half that amount. I fancy that Sylvia knows no difference of affection between that she feels for her brother and that for me."

"I am sure I shall love her," said Bernice, with a little flush of enthusiasm. "I never had a sister, nor a girl friend, Roy, and I have always longed for one. I wonder you did not love Miss Monk as you love me," she added, smiling. "I wonder you did not marry her, Roy, instead of marrying a little nobody from St. Kilda."

Lord Chetwynd's face flashed as he responded: "I had only a brother's love for Sylvia, and she, of course, had only a sister's love for me. I have been away from Chetwynd Park most of the time since my mother's death, and have therefore seen but little of my step-sister during the last year. But certainly, dearly as I esteem Sylvia, she does not at all answer to my ideal of a wife—as you do, little Bernice."

With many interruptions and snatches of conversation between the young pair the communication was at length written. Then the marquis summoned a servant, and the letter was despatched to the night post.

The next day was spent among the varied glories of milliners and dress-makers, and before night the quaint little nun-like girl of St. Kilda was transformed into a fashionably attired young lady.

The young marquis was delighted with the transformation.

Even her changed attire could not impart beauty to the small, dark, passionate face; but the brilliant eyes, the high-bred, patrician air, the upright carriage of the lithe, straight and slender figure, were all striking, and awakened Lord Chetwynd's pride in her.

Upon the afternoon of the fourth day, as the young couple were seated in their own parlour, the marquis said:

"To-morrow we will continue our journey to London, Bernice. And to-day, little wife, make your prettiest toilet for I have a fancy that Gilbert Monk will arrive in time to dine with us. He will be all impatience to see you, I know, and will not await our coming at the Park."

A knock was heard at the door, and a servant entered, bearing an envelope on a silver. The envelope enclosed a telegraphic despatch, which the marquis hastily read.

"I was right," he announced, with a beaming face. "Gilbert is on his way to us. He will be here in an hour."

CHAPTER IV.

CHETWYND PARK is one of the grandest estates in Sussex, comprising nearly two thousand acres of some of the finest soil in England, divided into well-tilled farms, oak and beech forests, and the vast and finely kept park from which the estate derives its name.

It has a mile or more of frontage upon the English Channel, including a picturesque bay shut in by tall chalk cliffs, and a strip of open, sloping beach, upon whose very edge, half in and half out of water at high tides, are gay little bathing and boat houses.

The mansion—the family residence of the Chetwynds for centuries—is a grand and stately pile, irregular, of great extent, and striking in appearance.

It is of mixed styles of architecture, having been built, tower by tower, wing by wing, during hundreds of years, and being now one of the largest and finest private residences in Britain.

The gray October afternoon was waning, when a girl came out of the great house, and began walking back and forth upon the marble terrace which overlooked the Channel.

She was dressed in a heavy crimson silk, which trailed after her in ruddy waves upon the white marble pavement, and was wrapped in an ermine jacket, wearing upon her head a little low-crowned hat, covered with nodding plumes.

Her movements were full of a sinuous, serpentine grace. She glided rather than walked, her manner of progression suggesting that of a graceful snake.

The girl was Sylvia Monk, the step-sister of the young Marquis Chetwynd. She was the daughter of the late Lady Chetwynd's second husband, Colonel Monk, by his first wife, a lady whom the colonel had married and who had died in India.

Miss Monk was beautiful, after a singular and somewhat remarkable type. She was a brunette, but as unlike Bernice as could well be imagined. She was dark to swarthinness, with lips and cheeks of burning crimson. Her jet-black hair grew low upon her forehead, and was drawn away in heavy rolls and bands. Her eyes were not large, and were half hidden by the heavy brown lids above them, but a line of intense black might be seen between the thick fringes. They were sleepy eyes, but upon occa-

sion they could open wide, and flash and gleam, and then would be noticed the odd red flicker, like the glimmer of a living spark of fire, in the dull blackness. She was gentle, refined, and her manners were full of a tender, caressing sweetness. She had inherited her father's power of fascination in remarkable degree.

She paused by the low carved marble balustrade of the terrace, and gazed upon the Channel with longing in her half-shut eyes. She seemed to be looking for an expected sail, and was so absorbed in contemplation that she did not turn nor start when a man's tread sounded behind her on the terrace, and a man approached her, coming also from the house.

This man was her brother, Gilbert Monk.

He was a short, stout, squarely built young fellow, with a swarthy face, and quick, restless black eyes. The lower half of his face was masked by a heavy black, silky beard. He was low-browed like his sister, but he had not her gentleness, softness, and insinuating sweetness. On the contrary, he was brusque, and affected a boisterous frankness and boyish bonhomie, and was generally considered a rollicking, thoughtless, good-natured, overgrown boy.

"Looking out for the 'Sylvia' as usual?" he exclaimed, coming near his sister. "You look in vain my dear. The 'Sylvia' sails will not brighten Chetwynd Cove this season. Roy will leave his yacht at Portsmouth, and come home by rail—if he ever comes. How do we know that he has not lost his life in some of those Norway wildernesses? We have not heard from or of him for four months. He may be dead for aught we know. I tell you, Sylvia, if I were his heir apparent I should consider my prospects of succession dimmed good."

The girl put up her hand with a quick gesture. The suggestion of Lord Chetwynd's death was intolerable to her.

"He is not dead," she said, in a suppressed voice.

"I know he lives—I know it!"

"How do you know it? By the incantations of your old Indian nurse and attendant, whom you persisted in bringing with you to England, against everybody's advice?" asked Gilbert, Monk, with a light laugh. "I know old Rague pretends to tell the past and future, and that she is the past mistress of wonderful arts, and that her friendship is greatly to be preferred to her enmity, but I did not dream that she had employed her skill in divination for your benefit in regard to Roy."

"Nonsense, Gilbert," returned Miss Monk, in her soft, weak voice. "Poor old Rague is no fortune-teller, whatever her pretensions. She is only an old East Indian woman, with passions like our own, quick to love and hate, revengeful and vindictive, but as full of love for me as a mother for her child. I know that Roy lives because I know it of myself—in my own soul. If he were dead, would I be standing here, looking idly out upon the sea? Why, I should feel his death without being told of it. When the sun goes down for me, Gilbert, I shall not need some one to bring me the news."

"If you mean that you will know of Lord Chetwynd's death without being told of it you must be losing your head," said Gilbert Monk. "Don't be a high-down goose, Sylvia. I can make all allowance for lovers, although I have never experienced the tender passion myself, but there is also such a thing as reason, and there is also such a thing as common sense. I don't like to see you pining for the marquis."

"Why should I not pine for him?" interposed Miss Monk, in her silvery voice. "Am I not his promised wife? Were we not betrothed at his mother's death-bed? Are we not engaged to be married?"

"You were engaged to him, true enough, but all that is over, and you ought to realize the fact," said Gilbert Monk, in a tantalizing tone as if it delighted him to disturb the soft gentleness of Miss Monk's habitual manner. "You must remember that, six months ago, you took Lord Chetwynd to task for his coldness and want of devotion to you, and that a lovers' quarrel ensued, and the result was the engagement between you was annulled, and he went cruising off to Norway. He is free, Sylvia—free to marry anybody he may happen to fall in love with. I must say you have been as foolish as a woman can be. You might have been Marchioness of Chetwynd to-day if you hadn't quarrelled with my lord. You might have had your house in town, your villa at Mantova, your box in the Highlands, but you flung them all from you in a fit of pique because their owner did not fall at your feet and worship you."

"I have not lost all those things, Gilbert," said Miss Monk, quietly. "I know my power over Roy. I nursed his mother through her last fatal illness, and Roy, who adored his mother, will never cease to be grateful for it. I am more necessary to him than you think. I am no statue, no picture, no household object, to be forgotten as soon as he is gone. Roy never loved me, except as a sister, but his

mother desired him to marry me, and he promised her that he would. When I foolishly tried my power over him and offered him his freedom, he accepted it with an eagerness I did not expect; but he will come back to me loving, repentant, and we shall be lovers again."

"Perhaps so," said the young man, doubtfully. "But what if Roy has made use of his freedom to fall in love with some fair Norwegian or Swedish girl? Heaven knows where he is all these months. Fishing and cruising can't occupy him all this time."

"Miss Monk's red cheeks faded slightly. "You delight to torture me, Gilbert," she exclaimed. "Why, he would never fall in love with a low-born and low-bred girl, such as he might meet in his travels."

"You don't quite know Chetwynd, Sylvia. He would not marry a low-bred, ignorant girl, true; but he might marry a low-born girl if he loved her. Chetwynd is a Quixotic fellow, full of whims and oddities, with no thought that his rank exalts him above the most of mankind. He has wild, hair-brained theories about respecting intellect, purity, and goodness, and I swear to you, Sylvia, if he has come upon some innocent, well-bred young girl in those Northern solitudes, he is likely to have fallen in love with her, and married her—yes, even if she were the daughter of a fisherman. He is proud as Lucifer, but his pride is not in money or rank."

"But although I released him from our engagement he must feel bound to me still," said Sylvia. "I have never regarded that solemn betrothal at his mother's death-bed as dissolved. He would not dare to marry. If he were to dare—I—"

The sudden red gleam from her opening eyes flashed her sentence with dread effectiveness.

Gilbert Monk uttered a boyish whistle.

"When Roy comes home," resumed Sylvia, after a pause, "I shall take an early occasion to let him know that I consider our engagement binding. I shall hurry on the marriage."

"You can't hurry it on too much to suit me," declared her brother, with sudden earnestness. "I am beset with creditors. I want money, and I sought you to-day in hope of being able to borrow some."

"I am nearly out of money myself. When I become Lady Chetwynd I will settle a handsome annuity upon you, Gilbert. As it is, my poor little income is hard run upon by both of us. You have a small income of your own—a hundred pounds—as I had, before Roy settled two hundred additional out of his own purse upon me, and surely a hundred pounds will clothe you."

"And keep me in jewels, travelling funds, bonquets, and all those little fol-de-rols, to say nothing of valet, horses, and such costly requirements! I tell you, Sylvia, I feel like a beggar, and am little better than one."

"Why don't you enter the army then—study law, or physic? Roy has offered to assist you."

"Oh, bother the army, law and physic. Bother work anyhow. I mean to achieve a brilliant marriage, as our father did when he married Lady Chetwynd, and so let myself into celestial pastures just as he did. I intend to profit by his example, and if you'll help me until I reach the goal of my ambition you'll find me grateful. Help me, and I'll help you in case Roy proves fractious or reluctant."

"You may have what money I've got, some twenty pounds or so," said Miss Monk, "but your chronic want of money won't be helped by a sum so miserably small. I shall have money on the first of the coming month, and if Roy comes home I'll borrow money of him. I shall receive Roy as if our quarrel had not been. I'll humble myself to him, and beg to be taken back to his heart. Gilbert, you don't know me. You cannot guess how I love Lord Chetwynd."

And the silvery voice thrilled with unexpected passion, and again the heavy eyelids lifted and the dull black eyes shot forth a red fire.

"I tell you, if any woman were to come between him and me I would kill her!"

And a panther-like fierceness convulsed every delicate, swarthy feature of the girl's face.

"He is mine, my own! Why, I have his love-letters in my desk. I have his love-gifts in my jewel case. He promised his dying mother that he would marry me. If he were untrue to me, better for him—for her—that he were dead! But he will not be. He regards my angry words at their just value—as so much idle wind. Oh, if he would come back! Oh, Roy, Roy, I am bitterly punished for my exacting folly."

"She leaned over the low balustrade, and looked seaward as if she expected that shrill, anger cry would bring him back to her."

The sound of a horse's hoofs on the avenue caught their attention. Gilbert looked in that direction.

"The steward has come with the mail-bag," he exclaimed. "See, he waves his hat. He must have the long-expected letter from Chetwynd. Good

news, Sylvia. Your lover is on his way home at last. I'll bring you your letter."

When he returned Sylvia caught from his hand the missive, recognising the handwriting, and pressed it to her lips.

"It is addressed to me," she whispered. "It is postmarked Edinburgh. See the date. He is coming home. Oh, Roy, my love, my love!"

"Would it not be better to postpone all this frantic joy until you discover what he says?" asked Monk, cynically. "Of course he writes as a lover, but consider my impatience to learn the fact. I am anxious to know if I am to be brother-in-law to a marquis or not."

The girl tore open the letter, and her gleaming eyes sought to devour its contents.

"My dear brother and sister," she read. "Brother and sister! What does that mean?"

"We can probably ascertain by reading farther. The letter is addressed to you, yet seems to have the air of a family communication. Perhaps he's been wrecked or ill. Read on."

"My dear brother and sister." Oh, that is so strange! How dare he call me his sister—I who am his betrothed wife?"

"Give me the letter. We shall never get on at this rate. And the letter is written as much to me as to you. Let me read it."

Monk seized the closely written sheet, and proceeded to read it aloud in an impetuous voice:

"You must have wondered at my long absence, and more still at my long silence. But I have been beyond the reach of Her Majesty's postal facilities. I wrote you from Norway, informing you of my then whereabouts. Leaving Norway, I visited the Shetland Isles, and while there fell in with a Scottish clergyman, who urged me to pay a visit to the romantic island of St. Kilda, a mere rock in the Atlantic, a hundred miles to the westward of the Hebridean island of Lewis. This clergyman, who had, strangely enough, known my father in their early manhood, gave me a letter of introduction to his sister and brother-in-law, Mrs. and the Rev. David Gwellan, the latter being pastor of St. Kilda. Longing for a dash of adventure, and caring little whether I went, I sailed for St. Kilda, arriving there early in August. I remained there until last week. As the island is inhabited by some of the most primitive people in the world, you will wonder what attraction held me there for two months. How can I explain without seeming to you fickle and inconstant? But since Sylvia so generously gave me back my troth-plight, declaring that we were not suited to each other, I need not hesitate to avow the truth. The Rev. David Gwellan had an adopted daughter about seventeen years old, a bright, lovely girl, well educated, well bred—in short, a perfect lady. Sylvia was right. Our betrothal, entered into at the entreaty of my dying mother, and adhered to by Sylvia and me from a sense of duty, had been all wrong. Sylvia and I love each other as brother and sister, and while I live Sylvia shall be to me as my own sister, with a sister's right in my home and a sister's place in my heart. I made use of my newly acquired freedom to woo this lovely island girl. I could not bear to come away and leave her. And so, my dear brother and sister—do you not guess the truth?—Bernice and I were married at St. Kilda last Thursday, and my bride is with me now at Edinburgh, and I raise my eyes from this paper to look upon her dear face—"

"Married!" said Miss Monk, with a stifled shriek.

"Married!" echoed Gilbert Monk, in a sort of stupefaction, looking down upon the shaking paper in his hands. He says married! I—I can't believe it!"

She arose and tottered to the balustrade, gasping for air.

Her dark face was livid and gray, and the look of agony in her fiery eye and the contraction of her besting brow showed the awful tempest that raged in her soul.

She loved Roy, Lord Chetwynd, with all her soul, all the strength of her strong nature; all her ambitions, too, and they were many, were bound up in her intended marriage with him. And now, at once fell down, love and ambitions were rendered alike vain.

The man for whom she would have given her soul was married to another.

Gilbert Monk crushed the letter in his hand.

"So end my hopes of a rich marriage, and so end yours!" he ejaculated. "My Lady Chetwynd will send me adrift at any early date; but you will be allowed to remain, my proud Sylvia, as the poor dependent, to humour my lady's whim; to dance attendance on her spoiled-child notions, to teach her propriety and the customs of civilized life. An adopted daughter of an island pastor—a mere nobody—the child of some rude fisher or fowler of St. Kilda, perhaps—a nobody, in truth, since her own parentage is not mentioned. Think of a chit of seventeen ruling at Chetwynd Park! She will consider you venerable at twenty-two; and she has

only to say a word to Chetwynd to set him against you."

Sylvia Monk drooped her heavy lids over her red and glittering eyes.

Her gray face looked ten years older, with all the colour stricken from it. Her low forehead was shadowed with a thunder-cloud of rage and hatred.

"He says he has not told Bernice—is that her name?—of our former betrothal," Miss Monk said, hoarsely. "He keeps the secret from chivalrous regard for me. He does not care to have his bride know that he could have married me had he chosen, and that I wear the willow for his sake. I appreciate his delicacy. I wonder what Lady Chetwynd would say if she were to see his letters to me? If she has a spark of woman's nature in her childish heart I can drive her mad with jealousy. Shall I suffer alone? I will embitter her life and his, and he shall never suspect my agency. I will—"

"What will you do?"

A change came over Miss Monk's face—a look so strange, so fierce, so deadly, so menacing, that even Gilbert Monk started back in affright.

"What I shall do remains to be seen," she answered, in a serpent-like hiss. "I shall not take you too deeply into my secrets, Gilbert. Old Rague is all the friend I need. But of one thing you may rest assured, my plans of grandeur are not frustrated, only delayed. I swear to you that in fifteen months from this very day I shall be the second Lady Chetwynd."

"But how? I can't understand—"

She interrupted him with an imperative gesture and a look that showed her to be the more daring soul and the leading mind of the two.

"Ask me no questions, but obey me implicitly, and your prosperity is assured with mine. We must prepare a grand reception for our happy pair, and you must go to meet them at Edinburgh. You must win the friendship of my lady!" and Miss Monk sneered. "Go to them, and leave all the rest to me. Make your arrangements at once for their reception. Give orders to the bailiff, the steward, the butler. I will summon the housekeeper to a conference. And when all is ready telegraph to Lord Chetwynd and be off to Scotland, leaving me in charge here. That is all, I think. I will leave you now, and you can impart to the household the happy news of the marquis's marriage."

She turned away and swept across the terrace swiftly, but still with sinuous, serpent-like rush, mounted the grand ascent of marble steps, and disappeared within the house.

"I wouldn't stand in Sylvia Monk's way for a fortune," said Gilbert Monk to himself, gazing after his sister and giving an involuntary shudder. "Sylvia has been so long under old Rague's tutelage that she sets no value whatever on human life, except it is her own. What is she going to do? She means mischief, that is plain. In India, among the natives, human life is held as cheap as rush-light, and Sylvia has imbibed from her old nurse many of the peculiar ideas of old Rague. Can it be—But it's none of my concern. Sylvia shall manage her affairs to suit herself without my interference, although I shall be ready to share the profit. Only I would not insure the life of Bernice, Lady Chetwynd, at any risk. And now to do as I am told—to call together the servants and tell them that Lord Chetwynd is married—and not to Sylvia."

He straightened out the crumpled letters, and went into the house.

He called together the steward and butler and briefly told them the important news.

The household at the Park had known of the engagement of marriage that had existed between the marquis and Miss Monk, and had not been told that that engagement had been broken. The surprise, therefore, of the survivors, on being told of the marriage of his lordship to a lady of whom they had never even heard, may be imagined, and their curious glances stung Gilbert Monk into a sort of sullen fury, which he concealed as best he might under an exaggeration of his usual boyish, off-hand manner.

He went to the house of the bailiff and communicated to him also the news.

He gave orders that a grand reception should be prepared for the home, coming of the marquis and marchioness, and superintended the arrangements himself. The next day he went up to London, and proceeded by an early train to Scotland, telegraphing, as we have seen, to Lord Chetwynd that he was on his way northward.

"I may as well seem friendly and congratulatory and all that," he thought as he came near his destination. "Better mask one's real feelings, especially when they are such as mine. I can safely leave Sylvia to avenge her wrongs and retrieve her lost position. By George! I wish I knew exactly what she is plotting. Better for Bernice Gwellan had she lived and died at St. Kilda. Her marriage with Lord Chetwynd will prove fatal to her."

(To be continued.)



[THE LATE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.]
NAPOLÉON III.

The glories of our blood and state
 Are shadows—not substantial things;
 There is no armour against fate—
 Death lays its icy hand on kings.

In the southern chapel of the little Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary at Chislehurst repose the mortal remains of a fallen Emperor, who, like his illustrious uncle, while Fortune showered her favours upon him was the idol of the people over whom he ruled, but became almost an object of execration when deserted by the fickle goddess. The grave errors which attended his path from the obscurity of exile to the exercise of imperial power had long since been condoned and apparently forgotten in the exultation of France over the glories both peaceful and warlike conferred upon her by the genius of Napoleon III.—only to be remembered and bitterly recapitulated when disastrous failure resulted from the struggle with Germany, which circumstances compelled him to undertake, although with reluctance and apprehension. Whatever may have been the sins which his own ambition or the exigencies of the situation impelled him to commit or consent to the presence of over 40,000 persons at Chislehurst on the morning of the 15th ult. to witness the funeral procession establishes the fact that the many estimable personal qualities that characterized the late Emperor had secured him a host of friends, and his unswerving fidelity to the friendship he professed for the country which had afforded him a home in time of need and the noble resignation with which he had borne supreme misfortune and affliction had enshrined him in the hearts of Englishmen.

When the history of the Second Empire comes to be dispassionately written, its fiascos and successes weighed in the balance, the fact will be distinctly avowed that, in Napoleon III., the French nation possessed a ruler who, if unable to curb the rapacity of his party, and powerless to carry out some of the designs he had conceived, nevertheless exercised a

wise and beneficent sway, developed the internal resources of his country, proved himself a skilful military commander, and fostered a friendly and commercial relationship between England and France which has been eminently beneficial to both nations.

Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was born at Paris, in the palace of the Tuileries, April 20, 1808. He was the third son of Louis Bonaparte, ex-King of Holland and brother of Napoleon I., his mother being Hortense, the daughter of the Empress Josephine, by her first marriage. His birth was celebrated with great rejoicing throughout France, as that of an heir to the Imperial throne, for by the law of succession the crown, in default of direct descendants of the Emperor himself—and he at that time had none—could be inherited only by the children of two of his brothers, Joseph and Louis. But Joseph was also childless, and the sons of Louis, in consequence, became heirs-apparent. After the restoration of the Bourbons, the ex-queen Hortense, mother of Louis Napoleon, went into exile, carrying with her her two sons, Napoleon Louis and Louis Napoleon. Under the name of the Duchess de Saint-Leu she took up her residence first at Geneva, and afterwards in Baden and Augsburg, and finally in the Castle of Ahrenenberg, by the Lake of Constance, where she died.

Louis Napoleon received his early education in the Castle of Ahrenenberg, on the shores of Lake Constance, under the supervision of his mother, from the Abbé Bertrand and M. Philippe Le Bas, and it is said that he proved anything but a slothful pupil; he was afterwards placed in the grammar-school at Augsburg, where he displayed quite a passion for history and the exact sciences. His fondness for athletic exercises was equally conspicuous. He was one of the best fencers, riders, and swimmers in the whole school. In Switzerland his inclination and aptitude for military strategy, especially in artillery and engineering, were first developed. He studied military science at Thun, under the direction

of General Dufour, and he even served for some time as a volunteer at the federal camp at that place, and at a later period in his life wrote a "Manual d'Artillerie," based to a great extent on his experimental training at this time.

In 1830 Queen Hortense quitted Switzerland for Italy, where she joined the other members of the Bonaparte family, and in the same year an insurrection broke out at Carbonari, in the Pontifical States, in which Louis Napoleon and his brother took part. The struggle, however, proved an abortive one; the Papal troops, aided by France and Austria, ultimately gained the day, and the young Bonapartes were banished from the soil of Italy. The elder brother did not long survive the disappointment; he died of fever in 1831. Louis Napoleon himself narrowly escaped the Austrians at Ancona, where he, too, fell dangerously ill. Hortense and her son now fled to Cannes, the same place from which the First Napoleon, 17 years before, had commenced his triumphant march to Paris after his return from Elba. After a short sojourn in England they returned again to Switzerland, where the Prince was admitted to the rights of citizenship by the Canton of Thurgovia, within which Ahrenenberg is situated.

The death of the Duke of Reichstadt, Napoleon's son, on the 22nd of July, 1832, made Louis Napoleon the next heir in the order of Imperial succession, but though his ambition might have been stimulated by the event there seemed little prospect at this epoch of his ever wearing the Imperial mantle. He therefore turned his attention to study and literature. His "Political Reveries," "A Project of a Constitution," "Political and Military Considerations on Switzerland," and the "Manual of Artillery," were published between 1832 and 1836.

In 1836, as the French nation gave no signs of its intention of recalling him to its bosom, he endeavoured to raise an insurrection at Strasburg against the throne of Louis Philippe. It is not too much to say that the Government of Louis Philippe had made itself most distasteful to the French people, and that the feelings of hope which had helped to seat the Duke of Orleans on the throne of France had been thoroughly disappointed. The noblest minds in France saw their hopes and expectations not only disappointed but warred against. The suffrage was a mockery, the number of electors throughout the entire kingdom being only about a quarter of a million. By the creation of petty offices beyond all number, and by a prodigal waste of money, the Court might be said to have carried these votes in its pocket, and the "national will" was a nullity, for there was no means of testing it or ascertaining it. The Prince knew all this, and was resolved to turn his knowledge to account; although it is generally admitted that his proceedings were rash and inconsiderate—perilous they certainly were. After spending a day or two in concerting measures with a few friends he set out from Ahrenenberg for Baden-Baden, ostensibly for pleasure, but fully resolved, as he himself tells, to elevate again the Imperial Eagle, or to fall a victim to his political belief, which was that the cause of Napoleonism was the only civilizing cause in Europe.

On the 25th of October Louis Napoleon appeared at Strasburg, and shortly afterwards, accompanied by about a dozen officers, he presented himself at the headquarters of the 10th Regiment of Artillery, the same in which the great Napoleon had served as captain many years before. One of the officers who accompanied him had brought an eagle—the "symbol of military glory"; this they displayed before the soldiers, and in a few words the Prince called on them to follow his standard. They accepted the omen and obeyed his call. All would have gone on well but for an untoward accident, the arrival of a certain general officer, who called out to them that they were being deceived, and that he who called on them in the name of the Great Napoleon was not that Napoleon's nephew, nor a Bonaparte, but an impostor. A lieutenant seized the Prince, and that act dispersed the illusions of Napoleonism. The artillery corps hesitated, and in such moments hesitation is defeat. Although another artillery corps (the third) soon arrived on the spot to support the movement, when it became known that the Prince was a prisoner his partisans dispersed, and each one looked to his personal safety. The majority were made prisoners, but some escaped, amongst whom was M. de Persigny.

Taken to Paris Napoleon was accused of treason, and without even a privilege of a trial was pronounced guilty, and ordered to be "deported" to America, as in the opinion of Louis Philippe his presence in Europe was a constant source of alarm to the Court of the Tuileries. He vainly protested against his sentence, entreating to be allowed to remain in France and to stand his trial side by side with those of his friends who had taken part in the affair at Strasburg. He was seized and shipped off to America, where he spent the chief portion of his time in rendering himself acquainted with the practical working of the Republican system of the United States. Napoleon did not remain long in America,

for his mother having written to say that she was dangerously ill he set the government of Louis Philippe at defiance, and returned to Europe in September, 1837—in the hope (as he himself says) of being "allowed to close his mother's dying eyes." Happily he came back in time to perform this last and office of filial duty, for Queen Hortense lived till the following month, when she breathed her last amid the regrets of all who had known her when, in the flower of her life, she graced the Courts of the Hague and the Tuilleries.

The Prince continued to reside in Switzerland till 1838, when the French Government felt somewhat uneasy at his presence there, and Count Molé directed M. de Montebello, the French envoy, to demand his expulsion by the Swiss Government, and to ask for his passport in case of refusal. This demand gave rise to considerable excitement in Switzerland. The Federation, and the Canton of Thurgovia in particular, were inclined to risk everything rather than sacrifice a citizen, for the Prince's position in the Swiss army entitled him to all the privileges of citizenship. A French army of from 25,000 to 30,000 men was concentrated on the French frontier, when Prince Louis publicly announced that he would leave Switzerland, his adopted country, in order to spare it the horrors of an invasion. He left Switzerland and came to London, where he mingled in the social life of the people and was hospitably received by several members of the aristocracy. It was here that he wrote his principal work, "*Des Idées Napoléoniennes*." It obtained considerable popularity among a certain class of French Liberals, passing through several editions and being translated into many foreign languages.

On August 6th, 1840, with but little preparation and concerted action, and attended only by Count Montholon and General Voissan and a few faithful adherents, Louis Napoleon ventured upon an enterprise which ended more disastrously than the insurrection at Strasbourg—nothing less than a hostile invasion of France. He hired a small steamer, the "*City of Edinburgh*," and, crossing over to Boulogne from the English coast, landed with his small band of followers on the shores of France, and marched at once through the town to the guard-house, shouting the well-remembered cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and distributing a few copies of a printed proclamation announcing a change in the government. The soldiers were called upon to join the Prince's standard; but a doubt having been raised as to the identity of the newly landed stranger with the nephew of the Great Napoleon—as was the case at Strasbourg—the main body of the soldiers, with their officers, refused to follow his lead. The Prince therefore retreated toward the Column of Napoleon, and there planted the Imperial flag. He soon found himself all but hemmed in by the soldiers and gendarmes, and therefore thought it prudent to attempt beating another retreat. It was, however, too late to make good his escape to the boat from which he had landed; accordingly, without much difficulty, the Prince and his comrades were taken prisoners and hurriedly conveyed to Paris.

Louis Philippe would not allow this second blow at his power to pass unheeded, and the invaders were ordered to be brought to trial on a charge of high treason before the Chamber of Peers. The prosecution of the Prince and his friends was conducted in a harsh and severe manner by the law officers of the government, who were resolved to resort to every means in order to ensure a conviction. The Prince was defended by M. Berryer, and when called on for his defence he avowed that he, and he alone, was responsible for the abortive effort which he had made to ascertain the will of the French people with respect to the Empire, and to give them an opportunity of replying to the question: "*Republic or Monarchy? the Empire or a Monarchy?*" and of recovering for France her lost place in the scale of European nations. Notwithstanding M. Berryer's eloquence in pleading the cause of the Prince, it is a most needless to say that he and his companions were found guilty. Count Montholon was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment; a young officer, who had responded to Napoleon's call, to transportation; whilst the Prince himself was doomed to imprisonment for life, the Château de Ham, in Picardy, being fixed upon as the place of his incarceration. During his hours of seclusion he applied himself to reading and writing. Several of his minor works were composed in prison—viz., "*Aux Muses de l'Empire*," "*Note sur les Amorceurs Fulminantes et sur les Attelages*," "*Fragments Historiques*"—in which he explained the cause of the fall of the Stuarts—"Analyse de la Question Suisse," "*Réponse à M. de Lamartine*," "*Extinction du Paupérisme*"—in which he advocated the establishment of colonies on the waste lands of France, with capital provided by the state, as a means of getting rid of pauperism. He also wrote several political articles for the Opposition newspapers, and contributed to the "*Dictionary of Conversation*."

He remained a prisoner in Ham till the beginning of 1846. At this time his father became ill in Italy, and intimated a wish to see his son. Louis Napoleon wrote to the government asking the favour of being permitted to see his father, giving his parole that he would return to prison when called on. His request having been refused, he and his friends in prison put their heads together in order to contrive some means of escape. The plan was agreed upon, and on the 25th of May carried out with entire success. The prisoner of Ham left the prison in the disguise of a workman, and passed unchallenged through files of troops and guards with a plank on his shoulder. The fugitive escaped into Belgium and thence to London. For Dr. Conneau, who contrived the means of escape, the Prince felt the strongest regard, and through all the vicissitudes of the Prince's career he remained his intimate friend no less than his private physician.

The Revolution of 1848 was the event which opened to the Prince the road by which he was enabled to reach the goal of his ambition. When its success was established Louis Napoleon repaired to Paris, and offered his support to the Provisional Government. He did not come forward as a candidate at the general election for candidates to the Constitutional Assembly, but at the partial elections which took place in June, 1848, he was elected for four different places, including Paris.

Events followed with startling rapidity. The Parisians rose against the government of their own creation. Cavaignac was named Dictator by the terrified Assembly, and suppressed the insurrection in blood. But the foundations of society were once more shaken to their basis. Cavaignac being invested only with provisional powers, an appeal to the nation by means of universal suffrage was made to ascertain who should be the new President of the Republic. There were but two competitors, Cavaignac and Louis Napoleon, but the result showed that the former had no chance whatever, and on the 10th of Dec., 1848, the Prince was elected President of the Republic for five years by what may be regarded as a unanimous expression of the popular will. The years that followed were years of great internal disquiet. Partial riots, constant squabbles between the Chamber and the President, at length merged into open warfare. The Assembly struck the first blow by the law of May 31, 1851, modifying and restricting universal suffrage, and a few months later by the famous "*proposition des questeurs*."

On the 2nd December, 1851, Louis Napoleon retaliated on the Assembly by arresting the leading members in their beds, and dispersing the rest at the bayonet's point when they attempted to meet. They were all temporarily kept in close confinement. At the same time the Assembly was dissolved, and a decree was issued by which Louis Napoleon proclaimed himself Dictator. The newspapers were also suppressed, and the few that were still allowed to be published obtained the privilege on condition of the most stringent censorship. To support these violent measures, and to prevent the Parisian workmen from resorting to their usual habit of throwing up barricades, several regiments upon whom he could depend were marched into the streets, with orders to suppress on the instant the slightest sign of insubordination. They obeyed their instructions. Some blood was shed on that day, and many persons obnoxious to the government were shot or deported to the French penal settlements in Cayenne.

Paris being thus subdued, the rest of his work was easy. His power was acceptable rather than otherwise to the people of the provinces, who cared little or nothing about the means by which he arrived at it; and the new vote, which was taken by universal suffrage, that he should be made President of the Republic for ten years, was carried by such an overwhelming number that he and his associates were convinced they had been too modest in their demands, and in a year from the suppression of the Legislative Chamber a vote of five millions of the French people proclaimed the restoration of the French Empire, and the installation of Louis Napoleon as the new Emperor.

From this epoch the reign of Napoleon III. really commences. Four years after he landed in France as a Deputy he corresponded with crowned heads as Napoleon III., and began a reign memorable in French history for a host of brilliant successes. As it was fitting for the re-founder of a dynasty to do, he was scarcely settled on the throne when he thought of perpetuating his line, and in January, 1853, it was formally announced that his intention was to wed Mademoiselle de Montijo, Countess of Teba—a Spanish lady said to have Scotch blood in her veins, whose beauty and grace are familiar to all who have seen or heard of the Empress Eugénie. On the 29th and 30th of January the marriage, which caused considerable interest throughout Europe from its apparently romantic character, was celebrated, and from that event flowed perhaps a greater concern on the part of the Imperial Govern-

ment for the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church than would have been the case but for the influence of the devout and perhaps even somewhat enthusiastic Empress. Not for more than three years, however, was there issue from the union; but in March, 1856, only a few days before the conclusion of the treaty which ended the Russian War, a boy was born, who as Prince Imperial now pursues his studies at the Woolwich Royal Military Academy.

The main facts of Napoleon's twenty years of Imperial power are familiar to the present generation. "The empire," he said, "is peace," but within two years of the declaration a war broke out which threatened to be European. The Emperor of the French had a difference with the Czar respecting the Holy Places, and the dispute was so conducted that in 1854 Napoleon III., with England for an ally, was waging war for the defence of the Sultan: The French Emperor reaped the greater share of the glory, but the war did more for him—it affirmed his position at home and abroad. He had visited England—Queen Victoria had visited him; he became a Knight of the Garter; opposition was stilled; peace was negotiated in Paris, and France captivated by the dawning glories of a new Napoleon. To none of the great national and international convulsions which have distinguished the past half-generation since the Treaty of Paris in 1856 was the Emperor Napoleon a stranger.

The Crimean War had brought Italy into the foreground, and enabled him to carry out the Imperial policy of humbling the House of Austria. He had taken up the Papal cause, and occupied Rome as a protector of the Holy See; but he was not disposed to show any consideration for the power which, after 1815, obtained the reversion of Italy. Orsini attempted his life and went to the scaffold. The autumn of 1858 was big with rumours of coming conflict. On the 1st of January, 1859, the Emperor broke the spell of suspense by intimating his dissatisfaction to the Austrian ambassador.

Negotiations dragged through five months, and then war became inevitable. The French army descended on Italy with great promptitude. Victory followed victory—Montebello, Palestro, Magenta, Marignano, Solferino. Brought face to face with the Quadrilateral, and fearing that Prussia might join in the fray, Napoleon suddenly made peace, and Lombardy passed into the hands of Victor Emmanuel, as a present from the French Emperor. Italy became united, and Napoleon claimed the price secretly negotiated for his assistance—Nice and Savoy. The French held Rome until a later period. When they gave it up Garibaldi made a fresh onset; De Failly defeated him at Mentana, and the Roman occupation did not terminate until 1870, when every French soldier was required to fight Germany.

In the interval between the Italian and the Austro-Prussian wars he entered on an adventurous policy in America. He allied himself with the Clerical party. He placed the Austrian Arch-duke Maximilian on the Mexican throne, only for the ill-fated man to meet his death at Queretaro. During this contest the United States were torn by civil war. The Emperor asked England to intervene on behalf of the Confederates, whose success was held essential to the safety of the Mexican venture. England declined, and so soon as the French Government had triumphed the French found it expedient to quit the land of Montezuma. Indeed, none of Napoleon's foreign projects prospered, except the expedition to China, where, with English allies, his soldiers, under General Montauban, now Count Palikao, captured Peking, and sacked the Summer Palace. In Europe his policy after 1859 was irresolutely pacific. He did not join the Danes. He looked on during the first part of the war of 1866; he suffered "an hour of anguish" on learning that Austrian power had collapsed on the field of Sadowa, but he had the satisfaction of receiving Venice from Austria, in order to hand over the city and the Terra Firma, including the Quadrilateral, to Italy.

The Revolution in Spain left the throne of that country vacant, and the proposition to fill it with Leopold, Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a member of the Royal House of Prussia, was so displeasing to the Emperor Napoleon and to a majority of the French people that it had to be withdrawn. War was however proclaimed against Prussia on July 15th, 1870. The events of that war are too recent and too vivid for recapitulation. Suffice it to say that the Emperor, having made the Empress Regent, left Paris for Metz on the 28th of July, assumed the command of the army, and sent for the Prince Imperial to receive the "baptism of fire" on the occasion of the shelling of Saarbrück. But the Prussian victory of Wörth, followed in rapid succession by those of Forbach, Gravelotte, etc., the capture of the French armies in Sedan and Metz, and the surrender of Napoleon himself as a prisoner of war, revealed to the world that the cause of the Empire was a wreck. The Constitutional Ministry disappeared in August, and on the 4th of September following the Regency fled from Paris, and thus ended the political existence of Napoleon III.

After a brief season of captivity at Wilhelmshöhe Napoleon once more took refuge in England, and retired to Camden House, Chislehurst, where on the morning of January 10 he expired from general prostration of the vital powers, after having undergone two operations for the alleviation of the painful disease which had attended the last few years of his life. His death does not seem likely at present to influence in any way the position of political affairs, but it is reasonable to suppose that the time will come when the ashes of the third Napoleon—like those of the first—will find their last resting-place on French soil.

GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Well, Edward—you are pulling through bravely I see!"

These words were addressed to Edward Zane, in a pleasant tone by Mr. Everts as he entered the sitting-room, where Anna and her husband were seated side by side on the sofa—the former reading to him.

"Yes, sir," said Zane. "It has been a hard struggle, but the worst is over. I am now satisfied that any man can leave off using liquor if he has only firmness and manhood. And with such a dear nurse as I have had it has been less difficult than it would be otherwise. When I craved—oh, you know not how terrible the craving was, no one can tell the feel it—for drink, and prayed her to get me just a few drops of brandy, she brought me cool lemonade or warm coffee, or some of the medicine the doctor prescribed, and with soothing words and loving kisses begged me to bear the suffering for her sake. It would soon pass away. Oh, sir—she has been more than a ministering angel to me."

"I am glad you think so, Edward. It will cause you hereafter to be tender of her happiness. It will strengthen you in your good resolutions."

"It will indeed, sir; and I thank you from my heart for your forbearance. It has been more than I deserved."

"Edward, we will not speak of that. I have considered the health and happiness of my child more than all else. She loves you devotedly, and love is like life to her. There are some natures so organized that they could not endure the destruction of hopes formed, principles settled. She is one of that kind. When she ceases to love you she will die!"

"And when again I cease to love her love may I die!" said Edward Zane so earnestly that his sincerity could not be doubted.

"Now let us talk of other matters," said Mr. Everts. "I must not stay long to-day. I have too long neglected my own business, and must get at it again. That fellow Bludge has kept away since Mary gave him her mind on his cheek."

"Yes, sir. No one from that quarter has troubled us since, or sought any interview. I shall send my resignation to the club by letter. I will not even trust myself there in person."

"And your yacht?"

"I will advertise and sell at the first offer. I will not go where I cannot carry Anna. As my wife she has a right to be and should be my constant companion."

"Again you are right, my boy. Your head was never so clear before."

"Any man's head will be clear, sir, if he keeps drink out of it."

"I believe you, Edward. Even I feel better for having left off my simple glass of ale or wine at lunch. It is but a small sacrifice to insure so great a reward. Ah—what is the matter, Mary?"

The entrance of Mary with an alarmed look on her face caused this inquiry to fall from Mr. Everts.

"Oh, sir, a woman is downstairs, sir to see you, and she's most dead with fear, and so faint. I gave her water to drink and came up to tell you."

"Do you mean Mrs. Heartwell?"

"Yes, sir—that's the old lady, and a nice one she is too."

"Bring her up here, quickly, Mary. Heaven grant nothing has happened to the old people or their sweet grandchild."

Mary hurried out, and came back in a few moments with Mrs. Heartwell.

The old lady seemed scarcely able to stand, and was helped into a chair by Mrs. Zane, who sprang to her aid.

The face of the old lady was white as ff from a long illness, and she trembled from excitement.

"What is the matter, Mrs. Heartwell—what is the matter, my good friend?" asked the merchant.

"Oh, sir, there has been murder and robbery down at the cottage."

"Murder and robbery?" gasped Mr. Everts.

"Yes, sir—the old gardener was shot dead while

he was helping the dogs to keep the burglars out, and then they killed the dogs with clubs. We were all woken up, and the old gentleman got one of the guns, but they were in the house by this time, and they knocked him down, and he is dead, I am afraid, by this time, and the old lady too, for she is feeble at the best. Then they tied and gagged me and robbed the house, and after that went away, carrying off the little girl with them."

"Did you see the men?"

"Yes, sir, their faces were black and they spoke like Irishmen."

"How long since was this?" asked Mr. Everts.

"It happened last night, sir, while the storm was at its height. The police saw the bodies of the gardener and the dead dogs in the yard at daylight, and gave the alarm. Then they entered the house, found me gagged and tied, the old man waltering in his blood, the old lady in a faint, and the house ransacked from top to bottom. I left the police there and hurried here to tell you, sir."

"I will go down there immediately," said Mr. Everts.

"Shall I not go with you, sir?" asked Edward Zane.

"No, my dear boy, no—you are not well enough. I would rather you would stay here. Anna, dear, take care of poor Mrs. Heartwell. You had better put her to bed and send for the doctor. This terrible shock has quite overcome her," said Mr. Everts as he turned to leave the room.

"So it has—she's fainting, ma'am," cried Mary, springing forward to keep the old lady from falling to the floor.

"I will help Mary to get her to a room and to bed, dear Edward," said Mrs. Zane. "Lie down till I come back. As soon as we get her to bed Mary will run for a doctor."

"Do not over-exert yourself, my darling," said Zane, anxiously.

"I will not—do not fear for me. Remain quiet and I will soon be by your side again."

The brave, true little woman hurried away now, following Mary, who had taken Mrs. Heartwell up in her strong arms, and was carrying her to a bedroom in the next storey of the house.

A minute after Mary came hurrying down.

"How is the old lady?" asked Mr. Zane.

"I don't know, sir—I'm to hurry and bring the doctor," cried Mary as she rushed out of the room.

The girl was gone in a moment, and Zane took up the book which his wife had laid down when her father came in.

Hearing a step in the room he looked up and saw Count Volchinski with an open letter in his hand advancing toward him!

"You here, sir?" said Edward Zane, trembling with vexation when he saw Count Volchinski standing before him. "I had given orders to admit no one while I was ill."

"I neither know nor care what orders you gave—the door was open and I entered, for, bearing a message from a dying woman, I felt no inclination to stand on ceremony."

"Great Heaven! a dying woman! What do you mean?"

"That when she placed this letter in my hand to deliver to you and these jewels, all your presents to her, Stella Hayden swallowed the poison she had already prepared. She said take him that letter and his jewels, and say that I died for him."

"Oh, Heaven, pity me! What can I do? She will die for me. She scorns my gifts, but will die for me!"

"Yes, the loveliest and most unfortunate of women."

"Mercy! What can I do? Are you sure she has taken a fatal draught?"

"I saw her drink it, even as I held this letter and package in my hand."

"Why did you not restrain her?" cried Zane, in agony.

"Oh, it is cruel, cruel for her thus to perish."

"She was dying for you. It was not for me to restrain her. She bade me say all her property was willed to you."

"Oh, Heaven! and I too rich to need it! May there not yet be time to save her?"

"Physicians have powerful antidotes. It may be possible!"

"Oh, then, fly for the first and best physician you can find! Go; thousands shall be yours if she is saved. She must not die for me!"

"She will never take an antidote from the hand of any physician. You might persuade her—no one else could."

"Oh, Heaven and earth! what shall I do? If she dies I am her murderer!"

"If she lives, you alone can save her."

"Then I will go. I will leave a note for my wife, who is out."

"I would not delay an instant. Even a stay of

one minute may decide her fate. Go with me in the carriage which brought me here and you may be in time."

Edward Zane did not wait to reflect. He did not pause to think. He at once started from the room, and the count, with the jewels, followed him with a smile of exultation on his face.

One minute later the carriage, with closed windows and curtains drawn, was driven furiously toward the residence of Stella Hayden.

In it, weak and trembling and full of wild misgivings, sat Edward Zane.

In it, exultant and strong in his belief of success in bringing that young man back into the peril from which he had so lately been rescued, sat the head Volchinski.

It was but a little while, yet it seemed so long, before the carriage drew up before the well-known door, the horses all flecked with foam.

Zane sprang from the carriage, rushed up the steps in advance of Volchinski, and almost tore the bell-pull off in his haste for admittance.

James opened the door.

"I fear it's too late for any good, sir. I sent for the doctor, and he is with her in the boudoir," said the servant.

Edward Zane knew but too well where that chamber was, and he rushed with swift steps toward it.

When he entered he saw her face white with agony, her eyes he thought already glazing over with the icy film of death.

A white-haired old man, the doctor, of course, stood by her side, striving for to swallow an antidote which he held in his hand, a goblet of dark-coloured fluid, which he said would surely stay the hand of death.

Edward Zane was too much agitated to notice the sound of the doctor's voice, or even yet he might have seen the snare laid for his fall.

No. He had only eyes and ears for her.

"Stella—poor Stella!" he groaned.

"Poor now—too poor to live since I have lost my Edward's love!" she moaned.

"Oh, live for me—for me, dear Stella," he cried, and the tears chased each other down his cheeks in swift succession.

"No—no—go back to her. I love you and I will die!" she moaned.

"Give her the potion with your own hand," said the physician. "She will not live twenty minutes longer if she does not take it. Offer to drink half—harmless to you, but half will save her."

"I would take it were it the poison itself," he cried. "Oh, Stella, if you will drink half I will drain the cup."

"To me—to me?" she gasped. "The last time, my health."

"Hear me, her. She is becoming delirious, and thinks you would drink wine with her. Say yes, and save her life," said the physician.

"Yes, dearest, yes—if you will drink half the contents of the goblet I will drain it to your health," cried Zane.

"Give—give it to me, dear Edward," she gasped.

Volchinski raised her head, the cup was handed to Zane, who placed it to her lips.

"Love me when I'm gone," she murmured, and she drank half the potion. Then she whispered "Drink, love, drink—it is my last request."

Edward Zane raised the goblet to his lips, he drained it—then as the fiery draught ran riot in his veins, as it thrilled him wildly from head to foot, he knew his pledge was broken.

Yes—the force of alcohol can never be misunderstood—like fire it leaves its brand on all it touches. "Heaven forgive me," he moaned, "but that was liquor in that glass."

"You have saved her life, young man—be thankful. There was liquor in the glass to conceal the nauseous taste of the most powerful antidote known to science. Look! her eyes brighten—her pulse quickens—she will live—she will live."

"And I—I am dizzy—what is the matter?—I feel so strange—I feel faint—oh, Stella!"

The young man was indeed dizzy, reeling, and faint. The drink was too powerful, dragged as it was, for his then condition, and in a few moments he was helpless.

"Lay him down on my couch now!" said Stella Hayden, stern and full-voiced. "The farce is over—let the curtain fall. I will nurse him into life. But hurry now and have all ready to remove him on board the yacht. This house must be closed at once entirely, for old Everts will have it searched. When Edward Zane finds himself with me, in his own yacht, with his all-absorbing thirst for drink once more awakened by the drug he has swallowed, he is ours, soul and body."

"Oh as quick as you can, Bludge, and have the yacht run down the river," cried Volchinski.

The wig and beard fell from the doctor's head, and Barnabas Bludge, in his own character, hurried to

obey the directions of Volchimi, while Edward Zane senseless and helpless, lay on what he believed was Stella Hayden's death-bed.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

A LITTLE girl wanting a fan, but not being able to remember the word, said she "wanted a thing to brush the warmth off with."

A NEW YORK paper proposes to send Mr. Stanley to discover the North Pole, cut his name on it, and the date of discovery, and bring it back with the stars and stripes floating from it.

FIGURES OF SPEECH.

CLARA: "Pretty figure that, Mr. Jones, is it not?" JONES (who has his eye on Miss Longbody): "Oh, jolly!—but such a deuced attenuated back, by Jove!"—*Fun.*

A WOMAN'S ADVICE.—An Indiana woman, just divorced, had written a letter of advice to her sex, in which she says: "I would say to young girls not to marry young, and when you are married live at least fifty miles from your husband's relatives."

"CACKLE."

YOUTH: "This is the sort of weather that's so good for ducks, eh, Jones?"

FORMER: "Ees—by 'ould sayin', 'tis, maister—sin' same roole makes it useful to geese!"—*Fun.*

ANSWERS.

"Oh, look here, Mr. Crispin! I bought these boots here only a week ago, and they are beginning to crack already!"

"Ah, miss, perhaps you have been walking in them! Our boots are intended for carriage people, you know!"—*Punch.*

OUR THEATRICALS.

BROWN (rehearsing his part as the "Viconte de Cherville"): "Yas, Maria, I've fondly loved ye." (Sobs dramatically.) "Tis well, but no mat-tarr." Housemaid (to cook outside the door): "Lawks, 'Lisbeth, ain't master a givin' it to missis!"—*Punch.*

BRAVERY AND BEAUTY.—The officers and men who were engaged in the Loosha Expedition are, it has been announced, to receive the India Medal of 1854, with a clasp for Loosha. None but the brave deserve the fair. Clasp is equivalent to Buckle. If that clasp, which those gallant fellows have especially merited could be conferred upon them, that would be something.—*Punch.*

"A CONTENTED MIND."

TIREMCE (Bricklayer's Labourer, acclimated to Paddy (just arrived from Cork): "Sell yer pig an' fourmichure, an' come over wid Biddy to this blessed country. I get t'ree and t'ripence a day for cartin' bricks up a ladder, an' be Jabbers there's a poor devil up at the top doin' all the work for me!"—*Punch.*

BAR ONE.—It is mentioned by the *Lawyer* that a lady has applied to the barristers of the Inns of Court with the intention of keepin' terms for the bar. We fear if this bar-maid is successful, the celebrated speech of the Solicitor General will be eclipsed—for length, not breadth—and that the lady advocate will give nobody any peace till she has won her silk gown.—*Fun.*

CALF STOCKINGS.—"What would you charge to knit me a pair of stockings such as these?" inquired a foppish young fellow of a lady who was knitting a thick, warm pair of woollen stockings for winter. "Would you have socks or stockings?" inquired the lady. "I want them to come up all over the calf," replied the inquirer. "In that case it would take some time to estimate; I have never knitted stockings to cover one's whole body."

EXCHANGE OF BUTTER.—We rejoice to see, from the Irish Agricultural returns, that the Green Isle sent us 116,501 firkins of butter last year, against 48,592 the year before. Let us set off the butter of her farmers against the bitterness of her "National" editors, agitators, and home-rulers. On the other hand, after reading Freuden's "English in Ireland," one cannot say that England has this year sent Ireland any extra quantity of butter—in that consignment at all events.—*Punch.*

BONE OF HIS BONE.

An anxious mother consults us as to the indisposition of her son, who is evidently suffering from the deepest depression, although the fact that he is engaged to the girl of his heart might be expected to have had an exhilarating effect on his spirits. We can only refer the lady to Dr. Carpenter's "Zoology," where she will find the following passage:

Love-birds are found in both Continents; they are remarkable for having no furcula.

Let an anxious mother be comforted—her son has become a love-bird, and consequently is without a merry-thought.—*Fun.*

TALLY ON!—We are very glad to see that an influential meeting has been held at Stalybridge, with

a view to instituting a Parliamentary inquiry into the practices of tallmen. There can be but one result of the inquiry—legislation which will render it penal for these sharks to give credit to working men's wives without a written acknowledgment of the debt by the husband. This would effectually extinguish the trade of the plausible rogues who call when the bread-winner is away at his work and persuade the silly women to buy their trash on credit at an exorbitant price, and who after they have extorted from the woman's fears more than the goods are worth send the husband to prison as a sort of extra usufruct. We shall be glad to see the dogs of the law sent after these sly foxes with a "Yoicks, tally ah!"—*Fun.*

DIDN'T WANT HIS NOTES.—A story is told of a Chicago dry goods salesman who has the reputation of being somewhat of a wag. He recently sold a bale of goods to a country customer, who was expected to commit justifiable insolvency as soon as he had disposed of his stock. As it was the customer's intention to pay a small part of his accounts with notes, which might prove worthless, the salesman—as the story goes—added here a little and there a little to the price of the goods, so that when the purchase of some five hundred pounds' worth had been made, of which all but fifty were paid in cash, there was no possibility of the firm losing anything, even should the notes go to protest. The transaction concluded, the customer brought the salesman to give him a present of some sort, and the salesman accordingly presented him a valuable red silk handkerchief. "That won't do," said the customer; "give me a nice silk dress for my wife, or something of that sort." "Can't do it," responded the salesman; "but I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll give you back your notes." "No," replied the customer; "hold on, I'll take the handkerchief."

THE FRIENDS WHO SMILE NO MORE.

I've seen you off select a flower
To wear upon some festive day,
That faded on the evening hour—
Without a thought 'twas thrown away.

The flowers that deck a gay saloon
We prize not when their bloom is o'er;
And do we not forget as soon
The once gay friends who smile no more?

The withered rose we soon replace
With one as fair as that we lose;
And, won by some attractive face,
As soon another friend we choose.

But fleeting must that friendship prove
And dearer ties we shall deplore,
When we, like those we used to love,
Know what it is to smile no more. W. E.

GEMS.

THE wicked live to eat; the good eat to live.

STUDY wisdom, and you will reap pleasure.

SIN has a great many tools, but a falsehood is a handle which fits them all.

INNOCENCE is as meek as a child, but often mightier than any giant.

HE that voluntarily continues in ignorance, is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces.

THE wrinkles of the heart are more indelible than those of the brow.

SUBMIT your sentiments with diffidence. A dictatorial style, though it may carry conviction, is always accompanied with disgust.

THE longer we live and the more we think the higher value we learn to put on the friendship and tenderness of parents and friends.

RESTRAIN thy cholera, hearken much, and speak little; for the tongue is the instrument of the greatest good and the greatest evil that is done in the world.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ANTS IN HOUSES.—Mix a teaspoonful of crystal of carbolic acid with an ounce of lavender water, or any perfume, and sprinkle well on your shelves, and the ants will undoubtedly "skedaddle." An occasional sprinkle will keep you free from the pests. The perfume is not necessary, but is used to cover the unpleasant smell of the acid.

FRENCH ROLLS ON TWIST.—One quart of lukewarm milk, a teaspoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of yeast, and flour enough to make a firm batter. When very light add a beaten egg and two tablespoonfuls of butter, and knead in flour until firm enough to roll. Let it rise again, and when very light roll out and cut in strips and braid it. Bake thirty minutes on buttered tin.

LEMON PIE.—Two lemons, four eggs, nine tablespoonfuls of white sugar; grate the peel and

chop the lemon-fine, and stir it into the yolks and sugar; put it into your puff paste and bake it. While it is baking beat the whites of the eggs till they are stiff, and then add three tablespoonfuls of sugar. When the pie is done spread the beaten whites smoothly over the top and warm it lightly in the oven.

STATISTICS.

THE total amount of landed estates, etc., sold and registered at the Estate Exchange for the past year has been 9,901,290L, against 5,769,384L in the previous year. The two largest sales were the Grimston-park Estate, Yorkshire, and the Tring-park Estate in Herts, each of which realised between 200,000L and 300,000L.

SHIPPING.—The official returns show an increase this year in the tonnage of vessels entered and cleared with cargoes at ports in the United Kingdom from and to foreign countries and British possessions. In the first three quarters of the year 1872 the entries inward comprised 13,053,246 tons, being an increase of 1,932,463 tons over the corresponding period of last year; the shipping of British nationality comprised 8,831,463 tons, an increase of 720,787 tons, and the foreign amounted to 4,221,784 tons, being an increase of 311,676 tons. The clearances outwards in 1872 have reached 14,617,596 tons, being an increase of 239,579 tons; 10,293,800 tons being of British nationality, and showing an increase of 163,262 tons, and 4,323,796 tons being foreign, and showing an increase of 136,317 tons.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MASONRY RUN MAD.—"Nameloc," the champion member of secret societies in Philadelphia, now belongs to 342 different lodges, circles, &c., and is the custodian of 1,377 signs, grips, passwords, etc.

A POLITICAL CHRISTMAS TREE.—A political Christmas tree has been exhibited in Paris. It was a good-sized fir from the Vosges mountains, torn up by the roots, with a quantity of the native soil of Alsace still clinging to it. Around this tree, richly laden with toys and bonbons, were congregated 2,000 children of Alsace and Lorraine exiles. M. Duguet and several other deputies were present.

THE WIESBADEN TABLES.—Wiesbaden gambling tables had a splendid financial year. After paying all expenses, which are enormous—5,000L a day, including the yearly tax of 200,000 florins to the Prussian Government—the shareholders have realised interest on their capital at the rate of 107 per cent. per annum. A nice little dividend this.

NEW RAILWAY IN TURKEY.—A telegram from Constantinople announces that the Sultan has authorized a loan of 25,000,000L sterling for the completion of the railways in European Turkey, and the extension of the Nicomedia line in Asia. The creation of these railways will be of so much importance to England in connection with her Eastern possessions that there is no doubt the loan will be favourably received in this country.

MINOR PEERS.—The following list contains the names of those peers who are minors, and the years in which they come of age:—1873, Lord Manners, May 15; Lord Garraugh, June 2; 1874, Earl of Orsallow; 1875, Lord De Freyne; 1876, Lord Byron; Lord Hastings; 1878, Lord Rodney; Lord Windsor; 1879, Earl of Carnarvon; 1884, Viscount Clifden; 1885, Lord Kenyon; 1888, Lord Southampton; 1893, Marquis Camden.

MENDELSSOHN.—Mendelssohn the philosopher—grandfather of the great musical composer—was, when a youth, clerk to a very rich but exceedingly commonplace, in fact stupid, employer. One day an acquaintance commiserated the clever lad on his position, saying, "What a pity it is that you are not the master, and he your clerk!" "Oh, my friend," returned Mendelssohn, "do not say that. If he were my clerk, what on earth could I do with him?"

HOW TO CHOOSE A WIFE.—We venture to give the following recipe for the selection of a wife: "A place for everything and everything in its place," said an old man to his daughter. "Select not a wife, my son, who will ever step over a broomstick." The son was obedient to the lesson. "Now," said he, pleasantly, on a May day to one of his companions, "I appoint this broomstick to choose me a wife. The young lady who will not step over it shall have the offer of my hand." They passed from the splendid saloon to the grove. Some tumbled over the broomstick, others jumped over it. At length a young lady stooped and put it in its place. The promise was fulfilled. She became the wife of an educated and wealthy young man, and he the husband of a prudent, industrious, and lovely wife. He brought a fortune to her and she knew how to save one. It is not easy to decide which was under the greater obligations; both were rich, and each enriched the other.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LOVING TOM.—Handwriting not bad, but has evident signs of carelessness.

H. P. S.—The last execution for attempted murder was that of Martin Doyle, at Chester, August 27th, 1862.

S. T. P.—Gentlemen's visiting cards may be engraved at two shillings and ninepence per hundred.

MARY C.—You will obtain full particulars by applying at one of the hospitals. The Royal Maternity would perhaps best suit your purpose.

A VOLUNTARY.—Protestantism is now fully tolerated in Spain. In March 28, 1869, the Eucharist was administered according to the Protestant rite in Madrid for the first time since the days of Philip the Second.

S. E. H.—To preserve ginger:—Soak the young roots till they become tender, peel them, and place in cold water, frequently changing the water; then put in a thin wrapp, and in a few days put into jars, and pour a rich syrup over them.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.—To dye ivory red. 1. Dip the articles first in the tin mordant used in dyeing and then plunge into a hot decoction of Brazil wood—half a pound to a gallon of water. 2. Almost equally serviceable—to steep in red ink until sufficiently stained.

JESSIE.—To remove ironmould from linen. Oxalic acid and hot water will remove ironmould, so also will the common sorrel bruised in a mortar and rubbed on the spots. In both cases the linen should be well washed after the application of the remedy.

POLITICIAN.—Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple, the third and last Viscount) died at Brockett Hall, 18th October, 1865. He was within two days of completing his eighty-first year, and had sat in the House since 1804. He was buried with public honours in Westminster Abbey on October 27th.

YOUNG DUKE.—Yes. In 1832 the Prince of Angustenburg, in consideration of a sum of 3,500,000 dollars, signed an act renouncing for himself and his family all right to the succession to any part of the Danish dominions. The Prussian plenipotentiary at Frankfurt who negotiated this renunciation was Herr Von Bismarck, since become so famous.

JACOBITE.—To dye wood the colour of mahogany. 1. Boil half a pound of madder and two ounces of logwood chips in a gallon of water, and brush well over while hot, when dry go over the whole with pearlash solution, two drams to the quart. 2. Put two ounces of dragon's blood bruised into a quart of oil of turpentine; let the bottle stand in a warm place, shake frequently, and, when dissolved, steep the work in the mixture.

A DISTRESSED ONE.—It is hard to advise you under your difficulty without a more complete knowledge of the circumstances. Manifestly you have in some sort implicated yourself with the lady, and there seems no ready way out of the dilemma of your own creating. In all things strive to be as frank and honourable as possible—resting assured that such a course is always ultimately the safest as well as the best. Tell her therefore of the change in your sentiments. Beyond this rather general advice we can for the present say nothing.

A MARINE (GOSFORD).—The sentiment of the verses is most creditable, and indicates a fine flow of human sympathy on your part. Here unfortunately our commendation must cease. As a literary composition the lines—to use the mildest language—cannot be highly estimated. Not only are spelling and grammar set at naught, prime conditions surely in any composition, but the versification is all wrong. No account has been taken of the cadence of the accents, nor of the numeration of syllables, without the careful consideration of which two matters no rhymed poem can possibly be composed. Besides, the rhymes themselves are often wrong; take for example the first two lines, and it is manifest to the ear that "rain" and "lanes" are invalid. The last lines of the poem give us "pain" to rhyme with "lanes." We advise you to try again.

CAMPDEN PORT.—1. James Watt, mechanician, engineer, and man of science, famous as the improver and almost the inventor of the steam engine, was born at Greenock, in Scotland, on the 15th of January, 1736. Comparing his invention with the atmospheric engine of Newcomen, it must be admitted that it is not without justice that the popular voice has awarded him the name of inventor of the steam engine. Watt died at Heathfield, in Staffordshire 25, August, 1819, in his 84th year. 2. The Romans taught the Britons architecture; in which, however, the Britons appear to have made so little progress that they were obliged to repair the wall between the Fort and the city with turf instead of stone, for want of workmen who understood masonry. The ancient Britons were not

ignorant of the art of making and dyeing cloth. They understood also the use and art of working several metals, as tin, lead, and iron, even before the Roman invasion—all these, however, in a somewhat rudimentary fashion; but long before the Norman Conquest the industrial arts were fairly established in England.

WAT TYLER.—Dight denotes to dispose, ordain, prepare, arrange, decorate. "But ere he could his armour on him dight" occurs in Spenser, as we should put it, before he could put on his armour. In the sense of "dight" it may probably be connected with the verb to bedeck. The passage you cite occurs in Milton's poem "Il Penseroso," and means precisely a storied window richly adorned and decorated. A storied window is of course a window on which some person or persons are represented—an historic personage, or an historic scene. Almost every English church has its storied window in this very comprehensible sense. And hence Mr. Kable, in one of his sweetest, most serious productions called "Church Windows," says:

"And, haply, as I gaze some day
On yonder storied pane, etc."

This may explain.

J. L.—All hair dyes are more or less injurious, as there is no dye, properly so called, which will touch the hair without at the same time affecting the skin of the head. The following is a receipt for turning gray or red hair to brown or black, producing its full effect in a few hours. Ingredients 1 lb. of clean slacked lime; 4 oz. of litharge; 4 oz. of chalk; 2 oz. of white lead, and warm water. Mix all to a thick paste with the warm water immediately before going to bed. If the hair be long enough comb it well back to the top of the head, and while the paste is warm complete combing the hair in it: be careful to leave no part uncovered. After this take a towel, dip it in hot water, wring it out, and while warm bind it over the head so as to cover all the paste. Tie over the towel a large silk handkerchief, and, what is better, a large piece of oil silk. This is to keep the paste from drying too rapidly. If black hair be desired do not clean off the paste till the next morning; if light-brown, remove the covering in two hours. The paste may easily be removed by brushing, where black hair be the object, or after the two hours' operation by moistening the hair and by using a fine comb. But the dye must be evenly applied, else the hair becomes mottled and irregular in colour—a terrible state of things.

HEART TO HEART THROUGH FIRE.

Oh! human hearts, whose cry went forth

Of bitter, fiery pain!

Oh! human hearts that heard that cry,

And answered back again!

No sense of former wrongs, no hate,

No envy, no self-will,

Could stay these bounding hearts that met

In one electric thrill!

A stricken people's cry for help

Came from the prairie land,

And quick a stream of succour flowed

From every willing hand;

The grain that Heaven abundantly

Had blessed with wondrous yield,

The fleecy coverings of the flock,

The fruit of many a field!

The prudent and the generous one

Each with the other vied;

The queen's proud rift and widow's mite

Sped swiftly side by side!

Unlike red war that, while it slays

On one hand, on the other

Plants seeds of hate or dark revenge

In man against his brother.

Can that be evil that brings forth

The virtues manifold?

That purges out the earthly dross

And leaves the finest gold?

Oh, leaping flames! oh, purging fire!

Ye lay a city low!

But "man's humanity to man"

Ye could not overthrow!

M. A. K.

ADA, seventeen, tall, fair, blue eyes, and considered good looking, would like to correspond with a tradesman's son.

JULIA, twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man who is tall and dark; one in the Royal Navy preferred.

ERNA H., very loving, would make a good wife and fond of children. Respondent must be about twenty-two, good looking, and one possessing a little money.

EDITH, eighteen, tall, fair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, handsome, fair complexion, and of a loving disposition.

FLORA, seventeen, fair, and considered pretty, would like to meet with a gentleman about twenty-three, in a good position, and loving.

ELIZA C., eighteen, dark hair and eyes, rather tall, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be dark, of a loving disposition, and fond of home and children; a mechanic preferred.

BENNY, twenty-three, tall, considered handsome, can cook well, and is fond of amusements. Respondent must be about her own age, handsome, loving, and able to keep a wife.

JOHN G. M., twenty-four, handsome, and loving, would like to correspond with a young lady who is loving, fond of home and children, and able to keep a home clean and comfortable; a servant preferred.

W. G., twenty-three, tall, dark complexion, and in the the Army. Respondent must be about nineteen, loving, domesticated, accomplished, able to sing, and could keep a home clean.

EDWARD, twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., light complexion, handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty, pretty, well educated, affectionate, and of a loving disposition.

MARY F., twenty-three, tall, dark, good looking, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be tall, good looking, affectionate, in a little business, and living near Derbyshire.

A. W., twenty-three, medium height, light complexion,

and fond of home. Respondent must be about twenty, medium height, pretty, and fond of children; a milliner preferred.

LIZZIE S., eighteen, medium height, considered pretty, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be loving, domesticated, fond of home and children; a mechanic preferred.

TOBY, seventeen, good looking, in a good social position. Respondent must be about nineteen, tall, handsome, affectionate, in a fair position, and with good prospects; a solicitor preferred.

ISAAC M., 4ft. 9in., fair complexion, gray eyes, dark-brown hair, good figure, good tempered, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be tall, dark, and from twenty-eight to thirty years of age.

LADY D., eighteen, tall, dark, black hair and eyes, good tempered, and fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man not over twenty-five, tall, fair, and domesticated.

MOON BAKES, twenty-two, 5ft. 8in., curly hair, bushy whiskers, and considered handsome. Respondent must be a lady about nineteen, who must be good looking, musical, and thoroughly domesticated.

M. E., a cook, thirty-two, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be about twenty-five, dark whiskers and moustache, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

ONE WHO LOVES, nineteen, first-class profession, well connected, considered good looking, and is of a loving disposition. Respondent must be about his own age, affectionate disposition, and fond of music.

SARAH T., nineteen, tall, dark, brown hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-three, tall, dark, loving, domesticated, and affectionate; a tradesman preferred.

BENNY, twenty-one, tall, dark-brown hair, handsome, and of an affectionate disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady who is handsome, loving, domesticated and fond of home and children.

LAURA, twenty-three, tall, fair, would make a loving and affectionate wife. Respondent must be tall, fair, affectionate, fond of home and children, and about twenty-three; a mechanic preferred.

ALBERT T., twenty-seven, 5ft. 10in., handsome, light-brown hair, and in a good situation. Respondent must be about eighteen, good looking, accomplished, domesticated, of an affectionate disposition, and able to keep a home comfortable.

O. D. V., a widower, without encumbrance, middle age, medium height, dark complexion, good looking, good figure, very temperate, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be respectable and an amiable woman, who would put a little capital to increase a good business.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

NAD is responded to by—"Jessie," a milliner, rather tall, fair blue eyes, light hair, would make a loving, and domestic wife.

ANNA by—"Edward," twenty-three, tall, fair and good looking.

ANNIE by—"Happy Tim," twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., fair complexion, and in the Royal Navy.

W. J. H. by—"E. E.," twenty-four, fond of home and children, and very affectionate.

NED by—"Frances," nineteen, fair, affectionate, can play the piano and sing.

TED by—"Kate," eighteen, dark, is very fond of music and singing.

MAURICE D. by—"Nell M.," twenty-five, tall, and considered a fine-looking girl, and is fully capable of making a home comfortable.

JACK G. by—"Lizzie C.," twenty-two, brown hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, would make a loving wife, and a domestic servant.

LIZA by—"J. B.," twenty, tall, dark complexion, loving, affectionate, fond of home and children, and a carriage builder.

TEDDY F. by—"Lizzie C.," eighteen, light-brown hair, blue eyes, handsome, loving, and of an affectionate disposition.

FRANK G. by—"Fanny G.," nineteen, brunette, pretty, amiable disposition, affectionate, ladylike, and fond of music.

WILLIAM W. by—"Lisa," twenty-two, tall, dark, good looking, thoroughly domesticated, and would make a loving wife.

RICHARD K. by—"Hettie," twenty-one, tall, dark, considered nice looking, affectionate, and thoroughly domesticated.

GEORGE S. by—"Lottie," eighteen, respectfully connected, has a loving, lively disposition, and is a Protestant.

CHESTER by—"Florry," twenty, medium height, considered pretty, loving, affectionate, fond of home and children.

POLLY by—"Albany F. M.," twenty-three, 5ft. 4in., considered good looking, future prospects good, gentlemanly, and would make a loving husband.

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